

Anuradhapura and Vavuniya farmers venture into lucrative Passion fruit cultivation reaping 50% profit under the guidance of Cargills supported by USAID



Cargills (Ceylon) PLC together with SOLID a project by USAID ceremonially handed over equipment to farmers in Anuradhapura and Vavuniya recently as part of the 100 acre fruit cultivation project that was initiated in 2015.

S. Sivakumaran, Provincial Director of Agriculture-North, Reed Aeschlim, USAID Acting Mission Director, David Dyer Solid- Team Leader, Pradeep Liyanamana Deputy Team Leader , Nandasena Moragoda Project Technical Director along with Nimal Gunaratne, General Manager, Cargills- KIST , Haridas Fernando, Deputy General Manager-

Agribusiness, Cargills and G. Neshakumar- Manager Business development (Northern Region), Cargills participated in the programme.

Cargills in collaboration with USAID have mobilized 250 farmers from Mahavilachchiya, Anuradhapura and Kilinochchi wherein each farmer is supported to cultivate ½ acre of land with passion fruit. Cargills has entered into a buy-back agreement with the participating farmers with a minimum price pre-agreed yet offering higher prices as market fluctuates. Cargills also provides extension services to the farmers to enhance product quality and productivity.

SOLID under USAID facilitates technical training and assists with selected inputs such as micro irrigation systems and water pumps to manage water as well as other equipment required for passion fruit cultivation.

Addressing the gathering USAID Acting Mission Director Reed Aeschlim said the project was an exemplary model demonstrating the potential of public-private partnerships. “This project has brought about total solution to the most needy farmers providing the market, technology and start up inputs which combined would have a sustainable impact on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries,” he said.

S Sivakumaran Northern Provincial Director of Agriculture thanked Cargills and USAID for their commitment towards rehabilitating agriculture in the northern region. “Cargills is one of the first Private Sector companies to come forward to revive the Northern Farmers who suffered for over thirty long years,” he said.

Nimal Gunaratne, General Manager, Cargills- KIST explained the significance of this project. “We are a passion fruit importing country. As a fruit processor Cargills too resorts to passion fruit pulp imports certain times of the year. So we discussed with USAID and proposed a programme to introduce this lucrative crop to small farmers giving them the required support to venture into to this new crop variety.

With this initiative we are not only empowering farmers but saving valuable foreign exchange for Sri Lanka” he said.



Haridas Fernando said, “Today with this project we are popularizing the cultivation of a great commercial crop. Each farmer planning ½ acre of Passion Fruit will earn a minimum of Rs 100,000 with a clear profit margin of Rs 52,000/= but because we offer the market rate farmers are enjoying even higher incomes. More importantly they would be using idle land during the dry season for productive use an additional income from intercropping. “

season thereby further bolstering income opportunities.

Cargills encourages farmers to utilize the land for vegetable cultivation during the Maha

“Our vision is to develop our farmers into entrepreneurs and this method fine tunes their business acumen. Further we have also extended the Cargills Sarubima fund to these farmers families as well thereby empowering the next generation of our farmer citizens,” G. Neshakumar added.



Cargills Saru Bima is a fund established by Cargills in 2008 in Thanamalwila where the Company initiated a concept of giving-back 50 cents for each kilogram of vegetables purchased from the farmers in the community to be utilized for community empowerment. Cargills has now extended the fund across all its fruit, vegetable and milk collection communities islandwide touching more than 25,000 farmers.

For the year 2014/15 benefits included 204 scholarships with 35 University and Vocational education Scholarships, 65 Advanced Level Scholarships and 104 Year 5 Scholarships. In addition 18 exemplary farmers were recognized for their service to agriculture and the local community with the Cargills Saru Bima Farmer Citizens Award 2015 presented by H.E. The President.

