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# USE OF MASS MEDIA IN EXTENSION COMMUNICATION

By

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**DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURE RESEARCH PROJECT**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA	Assistant Director of Agriculture
AV	Audio Visual
DA	Director of Agriculture
DARP	Diversified Agricultural Research Project
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
DD	Deputy Director of Agriculture
DAEP	Division of Agricultural Economics and Planning
DOA	Sri Lanka Department of Agriculture
FBS	Farm Broadcast Service
ISTI	In-Service Training Institute
PMU	Project Management Unit
SLBC	Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation
SPF	DARP's Special Project Fund account
TA	Technical Assistance
TTD	Technology Transfer Division, SL Department of Agriculture
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Careful planning and utilization of mass media by all participants involved in the communication cycle is now more urgently needed than ever before. Following the devolution of Sri Lanka's village extension agents into non-extension roles at the provincial level, a void was left in communicating timely, accurate and meaningful information in a language that village people understand. The burden was thus placed on the Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the provinces, to fill this gap.

The Director of Agriculture and the Deputy Director in charge of Technology Transfer decided that effective use of mass media would not only help provide information needed by the farmer, but would also strengthen the credibility of the institution in the public eye. Thus, extension communication was identified as a necessary component to its ongoing Diversified Agriculture Research Project (DARP).

The fulfilment of this relatively short assignment marks the conclusion of technical assistance under the DARP communication effort. Two other Technical Assistance assignments in the 1980's helped set the stage for an effective program aiming toward a systematic approach involving inputs by its clientele.

There existed certain needs inside DOA during all three technical assignment that required careful attention in planning for an effective program in extension communications:

- a greater knowledge of mass media audiences
- systematic inputs and involvement of clientele at provincial level regarding identification of communication needs, planning and evaluation
- ongoing monitoring and assessment of communication media dissemination
- use of a sound work plan tying in other DOA or provincial units whose programs would be affected by use of mass media
- delegation of decision making and approval processes to accommodate timely work
- updated facilities and equipment for media production
- ability to double up on job tasks
- a sustained operational budget to pay for maintenance, expended supplies, and special contractual expenses

With above realities at hand, DARP's communication collaborators developed a Scope of Work and Action Plan for the advisor that would fulfil short-term training expectations, while helping coordinate effective systems for extension communication planning and evaluating.

DARP was able to conduct a national base line extension communication survey, spearhead a number of multi media campaigns to support DARP technology transfer goals, strengthen each media unit of the TTD with needed hardware and hands-on training, and build further links between DOA, provincial and farmer groups through communication planning workshops.

As a result of DARP's extension communication efforts, certain milestones were achieved:

- \* A baseline survey was completed to help in determining multi media campaign effectiveness through ongoing assessments
- \* Six TTD managers have been given authority to work in unison with the formation of the Multi Media Campaign Coordinating Team (MMCCT)
- \* Two recently procured Apple-MacIntosh computers now promise greater flexibility and timeliness in turning out publications
- \* A new offset press, in procurement process, will allow production of more appealing publications
- \* Two publication staff editors have taken initial steps to organize and carry out a press release service, having published a DARP activity in national newspapers
- \* Some 20 staff of FBS, ISTI and AV Center are now trained in various media functions, recognizing the need to cross-train in areas not covered previously
- \* A qualified local media trainer has now assumed hands-on training with the FBS in Colombo, carrying out a plan left behind by departing advisor
- \* FBS, soon to have its own radio production facility, will have capability to produce its own programs without relying on time, staff and facilities of the SLBC.

As DARP concludes its third technical assistant assignment in this area, the extension communicators are able to perform technical tasks as outlined above. However, to further develop communication potential, a number of developmental areas need to be considered so DOA staff can better coordinate activities within same unit, among divisions, with clients, and with organizations outside DOA, including private sector. These areas focus on organizing client inputs, assessing communication impacts, streamlining communications organization and work flow, assuring quality products, instituting employee development, improving public relations, establishing a communication staff person at each province, and sustaining a viable operating budget.

Completing DARP communication work plan tasks tops the list of recommendations to help DOA manage its own extension communication program. Of priority, TTD should utilize findings from a recent national communication survey and begin assessment of its campaigns during height of media impact. MMCCT should continue its good efforts at maintaining campaign momentum by continuing to hold effective meetings and reporting progress through providing "minutes" to all collaborators. In absence of the advisor to assist in campaign progress, some method of tracking donor investment for media work is urgently needed. It is recommended that TTD prepare monthly status reports of numbers, locations and placements of print media, along with identification of dates, times and numbers of radio & TV broadcasts. DOA should provide verification that design and content of print media jobs have met with necessary approvals before tendering for publication. ADA/FBS should provide routine progress updates on Colombo-based training by local advisor-trainer, and work through TTD to secure workshop facilities and funding. Meanwhile, prior to pursuit of remaining recommendations, DOA would benefit by reviewing this report through a seminar.

Long range recommendations for a viable extension communication program should commence with organizing communication advisory boards at provincial and national levels.

Representatives of public, private, and other clientele groups should be involved. DOA should not forget its Farm Women and Youth program as viable participants by having such representation on some boards. Streamlining the communication unit into more descriptive, functional and collaborative areas should be next step to assure media have been identified and prioritized by those involved. A more defined flow of work and approval process is necessary in releasing media products to the public. A blanket approval authorizing TTD editorial and media staff access to various DOA officers, subject matter specialists, and information materials would accommodate timely press release service and quick development of media products for dissemination. DOA communication unit to develop long-range plan of work, to incorporate multi media campaigns into other agendas. Further training of communications staff should also be aimed at those involved in communication decision making, audience research, desktop publishing, and refining video field and editing skills to include video graphics and special effects. Major training goal should be to cross-train staff to perform multiple roles. In addition to reaching its clientele audiences, DOA might consider launching an aggressive employee development program to include participation at international association conventions, establishing in-house trainers, and instituting an employee in-house newsletter to concentrate on staff accomplishments. Stronger budget commitment for sustaining communication operations will assure that materials and travel funds are available when needed. For more polished print and electronic media programs, the means to pay for contract actors, narrators, artists and electronic special effect work need additional budgetary support, where DARP funds will no longer be available after August 1993.

Regardless of what potential donor aid may be forthcoming, a sincere effort should be made to support an expanded role in extension communications for the provinces. In addition to establishing advisory boards for clientele inputs, another important step would be to add or cross-train existing staff members at each province to undertake communication tasks. These persons could be supported with hardware, media materials, displays, and budget to perform certain media tasks that can be used locally, or as program inputs at DOA central level. Also consider some expansion of three FBS regional centers to improve facility, equipment, transportation, training and operations in order to meet demands of local clientele.

Many of the aforementioned recommendations will not see quick adoption without further assistance. DARP has met some of the for hardware and technical training. However, DARP has only hit the tip of the iceberg in helping DOA face the challenges of the 1990's. Responsible leadership will now recognize that further challenges lie ahead in systematizing an effective extension communication program. The Second Agricultural Extension Project already put in place with assistance from the World Bank will fill much of the gap. DOA's public image makers will require a great effort in managing its important role in shaping DOA's future as they apply new communications skills to satisfy a demanding public.

## **1. INTRODUCTION: RATIONALE FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN EXTENSION COMMUNICATION**

The Sri Lanka Department of Agriculture has a sincere interest in utilizing mass media effectively, whether to support extension information to farmers or to create and foster a positive public image. As it considers a strategy, the DOA realizes the importance of involving all organizational levels when utilizing mass media. Inviting input from outstation staff and clientele groups throughout the country assures that programs are focusing on real life of the farmer and rural community.

Over the past several years, extension programs world wide have endured significant budget cuts due to shaky economies and shifting priorities. Suffering the most have been extension communication units whose program offerings have been affected by loss of staff and operating budgets. At the core of the problem is the lack of public confidence or even awareness of the extension program, an organization that some feel has outlived its time and remains a luxury to afford. Indeed, the DOA in Sri Lanka can benefit from being aware of this unfortunate misconception by taking steps to safeguard its future. Through staff and client involvement at all levels of its extension communication programming, promoting user involvement can strengthen the credibility in the eyes of its clientele and others who can determine the DOA's future.

Considerable documentation and literature exists about the recent devolution of Sri Lanka's traditional agricultural extension service. In brief as the 1990's approached, some 3,000 national extension technicians (KVS) were officially formed into a village level agent scheme called Grama Niladhari (GN). This move coincided with a national trend to decentralize government, a move that could be viewed as worthy of a country interested in furthering its democratic institutions and providing more effective services for its citizens. Unfortunately, decentralizing the national extension service as it occurred has resulted in a program that effectively turned these extension personnel into public administrators, who are unable to carry out the transfer of technology. While this action may reflect a need to streamline government programs amidst decreasing budgets, the end result is an ever widened gap between DOA's central program planners, provincial field staff and the farming community.

The DOA has tried to meet the demands of devolution. Through the In-service Training Institute (ISTI), employees have maintained an up-to-date level of technical knowledge to meet clientele for new technologies. The DOA has also been reaching farmers through its Field Block Demonstrations, attended by sufficient numbers of farmers over the years. And capable staff working in the extension communications unit have for decades produced and disseminated impressive programming via radio, TV, newspaper, audiovisual and print media. While these actions may be viewed by some as satisfying its service mission, such activity is directed downward from a central level, and often through independently functioning units within DOA. Being aware of this, the DOA appreciates that in sharpening its focus on clientele and organizational inputs its potential to impact audiences will improve, and so will its public image. In assessing this potential the Department has identified extension

communication development as a necessary component to its ongoing Diversified Agriculture Research Project (DARP).

This technical assistance assignment was not the first attempt at an extension communication TA role. On two previous occasions, agricultural communication advisors Dr. L. Dale Haws and Dr. Howard E. Ray investigated extension communication in Sri Lanka in the mid to late 1980's. Both agreed that any successful program had to include the establishment of effective linkages at various levels of the technology transfer communication cycle. Advisor Haws tied his recommended communication plan with ready made technologies present in Sri Lanka at the time, while Ray strengthened that approach by applying successfully proven marketing methods. While their recommendations were sound, and were based on world-wide experiences, their tenure in the country was hardly long enough to put into effect the kind of change necessary to help put its potential success into practice.

From past experience, and taking present and future into consideration, DARP's third extension communication advisor made every effort to meet DOA's expectations to provide technical training, while helping coordinate communication programming with an eye toward clientele participation.

## 2. CONSTRAINTS: FOCAL AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Upon arrival in February, 1992 the advisor queried a colleague on the reason for such a time gap between the previously mentioned TA assistance assignments and the emergence of DARP's long term communication program. Reason cited was that previous separate divisions of Education & Training and Extension needed to merge into a single division before it could benefit the most from a development program. However, as DARP communication program activities commenced, certain realities present in a newly formed Technology Transfer Division (TTD) remained basically the same as prior to the merger. The constraints identified below address these as focus areas to help strengthen the capability to carry out the important mission of supporting technology transfer through an effective communication program.

### 2.1 KNOWLEDGE OF AND INVOLVEMENT OF CLIENTELE

The most obvious challenge facing the advisor was to encourage a system of clientele input into decisions on technology selection, dissemination and impact assessments. Anything short of that was to sustain a top-down approach that could expect little support at the provincial level. Knowing this, one would not be surprised to realize the need for a central source of usable information about DOA's very target clientele: the farmer.

### 2.2 ORGANIZATION

Finding ways to help streamline work flow and reporting it's progress to key decision makers is a major task, particularly in helping DOA become effective at carrying out a complex extension campaign program. For example, two key media coordinating staff remained in separate buildings at a distance to require vehicle or use of unreliable telephone access. The broadcast coordinator with staff of 15 was located some 120 km away at Colombo facility. Thus, DOA staff were not seen as able to respond quickly to urgent communication matters. A strong division of labour amongst staff in the various communication units was also observed with the effect of seeing more people involved in work tasks than what was required to get a job task accomplished. It was also apparent that there did not appear to be defined job descriptions or functional work titles for staff. There was also an apparent need observed for various units and divisions to partake in planning the use of mass media into ongoing field programs.

### 2.3 DECISION MAKING

The advisor observed early on that efforts to carry out print and broadcast media tasks were hampered by lack of editorial staff quick access to DOA officers and content specialists to gather subject matter content. The practice has been to require special letters from supervisors authorizing contacts with various divisions in order to write press releases or gain needed technical content. The presence of a content and style approval process for media materials in production would prevent needless

revisions and subsequent waste of resources.

## 2.4 MEANINGFUL PUBLICITY TO PUBLIC AND EMPLOYEES

The ability to routinely publish articles on events, programs and accomplishments to general public might help DOA explain its purpose. The most obvious solution for a public affairs service was a low cost press release program. The advisor also observed that further enhancement of the DOA newsletter, "News In Brief" would do more to make programs interesting to the non-DOA employee, or non-technical reader. Some means to inform fellow employees what their colleagues are doing, and how employees contribute to success would require the existence of some in-house newsletter that would highlight people as well as explain policies.

## 2.5 FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT

Another challenge was to determine how to upgrade publications production system and hardware so that existing publications would be attractive to the non-technical person. The need for a dedicated radio facility for the Farm Broadcasting Service (FBS) was already put on the advisor's agenda as an immediate task to undertake. Meanwhile, FBS programs were still being produced at Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) facility at convenience of SLBC agenda. An incomplete video editing system, purchased prior to the advisor's arrival with DARP funds, meant any kind of video effects of the simplest nature still required contracting services on the outside because it lacked the full compliment of needed hardware. The existence of an antiquated and worn out printing press made the timely and attractive publication of print materials for DOA impossible without an outside vendor.

## 2.6 SUSTAINED OPERATING BUDGET

Lastly, a dedicated operating budget to replace expendable commodities or pay for contractual services is necessary to sustain production services. The AV Center video unit, for example, had to delay location video shooting for months until DARP could purchase three studio lamps. The same unit was unable to operate new broadcast quality video editing equipment for a year, because a cable connecting the two editing decks was not procured as part of the package.

### **3. WORK PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

A review of Scope of Work and assessment of the situation in February, 1992 allowed DARP and DOA colleagues to develop a program that would help reach select communication goals and coincide with final months of DARP project activity. The tasks as outlined in the communication work plan approved by Core Group in March 1992, covered four basic areas:

- 1) assessing communication effectiveness;
- 2) facilities upgrading;
- 3) staff training; and
- 4) coordinating multi media campaigns.

It is now clear that the work plan as developed certainly was aimed in the right direction: that is, to help DOA utilize mass media in a way that would involve people working together for common goals. Of course it was also a very ambitious work plan for the technical assistance assignment of nine, extended to twelve months.

To summarize work plan accomplishments as an update to Interim Progress Report on Extension Communications Technical Assistant Assignment, December 1992, program achievements are now, as shown below.

#### **3.1 OBJECTIVE ONE: PLAN, MONITOR AND EVALUATE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS**

##### **3.1.1 Activity: Conduct a Survey of Paddy Farmers to Assess Technical Readiness to Adopt Selected Technologies and Present Methods of Receiving Agricultural Information**

Status: Completed September 30, 1992

Impact: This survey set the stage for helping collect some basic information about how successful DOA is in reaching its target audiences with what kind of "impact". Utilizing results contained in report, "Baseline Survey to Launch Multi-Media Campaigns," TTD managers will be in position to determine the proper mix of media, selection of program styles and various channels of dissemination that would be most effective in getting campaign message across. Another goal intended through this survey was to help DOA set up a needed "cell" within DOA that would be able to start immediately utilizing these survey benchmarks to plan and carry out assessments of multi media campaigns. In addition, steps can now be taken to set up field participation through provincial and farmer groups to play an active role in feeding back information to help in the assessments of the ongoing campaigns.

**3.1.2 Activity: Write an End of Tour Report on TTD's Effectiveness and Recommendations for Further Strengthening**

**Status:** Completed 18 February, 1993

**Impact:** This report contains certain recommendations that, if implemented, will give DOA an opportunity to provide linkages and client/user inputs throughout the organization in its future planning, executing and assessments of mass media usage.

**3.2 OBJECTIVE TWO: STRENGTHENING OF TECHNICAL CAPABILITY**

Since the Scope of Work had already identified the installation of a new FBS studio and some publications equipment, the DOA had asked the advisor to pursue this activity early on. Following an assessment of FBS, AV Center, Publications editorial, and Print Shop sections in DOA, the advisor made every effort to advise and follow up.

**3.2.1 Activity: Install Farm Broadcast Service Radio Production Studio and Equipment**

**Status:** At conclusion of this Technical Assistant Assignment, USAID had approved the expenditure of DARP funds to install studio for FBS. Recent modifications to the technical specifications and reductions in budget require that DARP to re-invite bids from local firms interested in carrying out the installation. Meanwhile, the DOA is proceeding on the procurement of recording equipment for the studio.

**Impact:** With the installation of a new recording facility, FBS will be in position to produce its own radio programs on FBS agenda for broadcast by SLBC.

**3.2.2 Activity: Procure Desktop Publishing Computers**

**Status:** Computers installed, December 1992. Staff training to be arranged through a local firm.

**Impact:** With the procurement of state-of-the-art publication systems in place (two Apple MacIntosh LC II computers, graphic scanners, and laser printers), the Publications Unit editorial staff can now design and prepare camera ready print materials in a shorter period of time and with more accuracy and creative potential than before.

### **3.3 OBJECTIVE THREE: STRENGTHENING HUMAN RESOURCES THROUGH TRAINING**

A well organized TTD communication effort supporting client/user requires a staff that can accomplish certain technical, creative and evaluative tasks unique to the media field. DARP's effort in hands-on training was provided to give DOA the opportunity to experience all steps in how a given piece of media is produced, directed and evaluated.

#### **3.3.1 Activity: Workshops in Radio Broadcasting**

**Status:** Two week-long workshops conducted. 15 staff of FBS and ISTI participating. July 1992 and August 1992.

Arranged for two-month hands-on training for FBS staff in Colombo with assistance of local advisor/trainer. January-March 1993.

**Impact:** A number of training workshops carried out by the advisor and an SLBC broadcaster had proven that DOA has a good body of people from which to draw on to accomplish any media task. Following the workshops, it became obvious that a major goal achieved was building capability for staff to select a subject of interest, fully direct it, and evaluate it without relying on someone of higher rank to make such decisions. Realizing also that communication staff appear to have strong divisions of labor, workshops were structured to give some 20 participants the chance to perform many roles that would otherwise take several persons to perform. This approach will be urgently needed if proposed restructuring results in some staff consolidations.

#### **3.3.2 Activity: Workshops in Video Script Writing & Production**

##### Workshop One

**Status:** Conducted week-long hands-on workshop in video script writing. 15 staff of AV Center, FBS and ISTI. November 1992.

**Impact:** Some time ago, AV Center was assigned task by DOA of producing approximately 20 video programs in various lengths for broadcast purposes, but available staff had no experience in script writing. Since DOA had also launched its Pesticide Safety multi media campaign, this workshop was able to focus on scripts for campaign video spots to be broadcast, thus providing participants with an end product to use.

##### Workshop Two

**Status:** Field video production & editing workshops held with AV technical staff of video unit in finalizing 1-minute video spots on "Pesticide Safety". December, 1992, January, 1993

**Impact:** Remaining video workshop activities incorporated hands-on training with production of a real video program using professional actors, AV Center's new U matic high band editing equipment, and special effects post production work in Colombo at National Youth Services Center. For first time, DARP was able to contribute to an often neglected recipient of staff development for TTD.

### **3.3.3 Activity: Press Release Training and Production for Public Awareness**

**Status:** Two editors assigned to handle press releases. Press release for DARP activity, "Plant Quarantine Review," written and published in national newspapers. September 1992.

**Impact:** Assuming this service is continued, two editors are now able to gather information and content concerning events and activities, writing a timely news release, and having it published in national newspapers. DOA has taken its first step toward instituting and supporting a low cost, but most important, public relations tool.

### **3.3.4 Activity: Desktop Publications Training with New Computers**

**Status:** To be implemented

### **3.3.5 Activity: Out of Country Study Tours**

**Status:** Four TTD communication staff spent four weeks abroad involved in workshops in mass media development. Three TTD staff went to University of Illinois while one from FBS attended program at Asian Pacific Development Communication Center, Dhurakijpundit University, Bangkok, Thailand. September-October 1992.

**Impact:** Linkages built with DOA staff, a leading US land grant university, and a regional development communication center. Four key TTD staff witnessed and partook in progressive extension communication program planning, production, dissemination and evaluation through their respective programs.

## **3.4 OBJECTIVE FOUR: CONDUCT AND EVALUATE MULTI MEDIA PILOT CAMPAIGNS**

### **3.4.1 Activity: Planning for Multi Media Campaigns**

**Status:** Multi Media Campaign, "Safe Use of Pesticides" planned and launched; other campaigns in planning. March 1992, ongoing.

A mass media campaign launched on "Safe Use Of Pesticides", for period 10/92-7/93. Total of eight radio spots, broadcast in Sinhala and Tamil, as scheduled by ADA/FBS with SLBC at various times of

broadcast day. Print media, coordinated by ADA/Publications, includes ongoing dissemination to target districts for total of 450 banners, 10,000 posters, 30,000 folders, and six monthly articles appearing in three national newspapers between its August, 1992 and January 1993 issues.

Specific plans made for Quality Seeds promotion campaign finalized on February 9, 1993 with TTD and Seeds Division.

**Impact:** All units in TTD appear to work in harmony and are beginning to involve other divisions on a regular basis. In addition, several workshops have been conducted involving provincial directors in the campaign planning.

#### 4. COST EFFECTIVENESS OF MASS MEDIA

As with any public information/education program, indicators to measure success are continually required. These can be used to tailor the approach in order to improve effectiveness, and ultimately will be used to evaluate the budget commitment the DOA should make in further expansion of mass media utilization. One kind of information to justify wise use of campaign finances is by comparing cost effectiveness of the various media. The figures can be used for comparing costs of reaching potential audiences with various media--banners, posters, flyers, along with radio and TV broadcasting. Use of mass media cost effective ratios in this fashion can even be compared with the cost of sending extension agents to conduct training workshops with farmers. As for measuring impact, however, through assessment of message effect, DOA will need to apply feedback & evaluation methodologies.

In the examples below, the cost figures are actuals taken from recent DARP experience for the ongoing campaign on "Safe Use of Pesticides". It is not yet possible, however, to determine the number of farmers that will be reached through each media. In fact, further monitoring at the field level is needed to determine just when and where the various materials were displayed or distributed. Again, follow-up field visits will be needed to gather the necessary information. These are, therefore, only hypothetical examples.

In arriving at the figures below it is estimated that there are about 1,600,000 farm families in Sri Lanka, exclusive of the North & East. "Base Line Survey to Launch Multi-Media Campaigns" results show average family of 5, bringing total potential to 8 million persons.

PRODUCTION & DISSEMINATION OF 450 "PESTICIDE SAFETY" BANNERS TO PROVINCES TO REACH 10 PERCENT (HYPOTHETICALLY) OF POTENTIAL FARMER POPULATION, AT COST OF RS. 279,000 (Note that the cost of displaying banners is not included.)

**Average Cost = Rs 1.07 per Sri Lanka farmer to use banners.**

PRODUCTION & BROADCASTING A RADIO SPOT ANNOUNCEMENT, "SAFE USE OF PESTICIDES" TWO TIMES A DAY, FIVE DAYS A WEEK FOR 36 WEEKS, TO REACH 50 PERCENT (HYPOTHETICALLY) OF THE FARMER POPULATION, AT COST OF RS. 227,720.

**Average Cost = Rs 0.28 per Sri Lanka farmer to use radio.**

ONE DOA OFFICER TO CONDUCT A WORKSHOP ON "PESTICIDE SAFETY" TO 100 FARMERS AWAY FROM DUTY STATION.

Assuming daily wage rate of Rs. 250 (based on Rs 5,000/month) salary, a full day to complete this task, materials and travel costs, we could show a cost as follows:

Wages	:	Rs. 250
Benefits	:	Rs 250
Fuel	:	Rs. 200
Per diem	:	Rs. 300

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<b>TOTAL</b>	:	<b>Rs. 1,000</b>
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**Average Cost = Rs. 10.00 per farmer to use outstation workshops.**

One can see that the cost of using mass media is a wise investment as a supplement to DOA's field extension delivery program. The reader of these cost comparisons should not be quick to draw the budget sword against extension agent delivery. Mass media by itself will not fill in total gaps of information left vacant by extension agents. Rather, it is the well planned, systematic approach to using mass media, working with and through a network of provincial and other field personnel that will achieve effective use of the media employed. Since DOA has taken initial steps toward these linkages through involving provincial leaders in campaign planning, strengthening this link will allow for a more accurate measurement of mass media effectiveness because of total organizational participation.

## **5. CLOSING OUT DARP COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES**

DARP has assisted DOA counterparts and technical staff in reaching certain skills levels by supporting hands-on training. Staff in FBS, AV Center and Publications units can be applauded for their diligence, quick grasping of knowledge, interest, hospitality and eagerness to continue learning. However, beyond specific technical skills training, the Department will benefit by continuing its progression toward getting its staff to work together in coordinating roles. It is encouraging to say that the DOA has proven its potential in coordinating its extension communication work. A recent meeting of TTD and Seeds Division, with a CARE representative also present, resulted in a well designed, detailed plan to conduct its fourth multi media campaign--quality seeds promotion. This kind of coordination should continue with involvement of provincial staff, and other organizations such as the private sector and its associations, working on programs of mutual interest.

Any plan to offer a future direction for the extension communication program to address the development priorities listed earlier. However, before pursuing issues related to long range growth, it would be advisable to finalize tasks that were originated in collaboration with the DARP communication advisor. These tasks are crucial not only to assure programs are on target, but to show that earmarked DARP funds will continue to be expended in meaningful directions. These tasks are now highlighted for the benefit of Project planners and monitors.

### **5.1 DETERMINE USE OF SURVEY RESULTS**

Results in the draft report, "Baseline Survey to Launch Multi Media Campaigns," has not been sufficiently utilized due to disagreements about the approach in survey design. Since this survey represents a joint effort among qualified individuals in DOA and DARP, this matter urgent attention and solution. After data tabulation and analysis was completed, design problems did indeed, become evident in a few areas. But the majority of the information can be useful. Deadlock will be resolved only when the value of its intended use can be seen. This document contains information that is crucial in evaluating ongoing and timely multi media campaigns. The advisor recommends a board of DARP and DOA reviewers convene to hear the specific concerns raised on design items in question, and conclude as to the disposition of survey report and recommended utilization. Of urgency is the need to begin evaluating "Pesticide Safety" and other multi media campaigns, where benchmark indicators appearing on pp 35 and 36 of the document would be used.

### **5.2 CONTINUE MULTI MEDIA CAMPAIGN COORDINATING TEAM**

Members representing communication leadership had organized a team in September, 1992 to coordinate the multi media campaigns. This was a valuable step and a commendable one because it resulted in the delegation of authority to the people who are directly responsible for implementing the activities. Representing print, broadcast and audiovisual graphics media, members have held regular meetings and

reported on decisions and campaign progress with "minutes" published and distributed. This activity to continue with meetings at least monthly and "minutes" sent to PMU and DARP.

### **5.3 REPORTING SPECIFICS ON DARP EXPENDITURES FOR COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES**

In the wake of the departure of extension communication advisor, considerable activity in the production and dissemination of print and broadcast media continues to be supported through special project funds. A total of Rs. 3,730,613, (US \$ 84,787) have been expended thus far according to a summary provided by the DARP Special Project Fund unit. Currently, multi media campaign activity continues to draw down on remaining funds. While campaign leaders are now guided by a detailed work plan, there has not been, to date, a breakdown and reporting of dates, numbers and locations of print and broadcast materials disseminated.

Since the absence of a communication advisor may leave a gap in daily coordination of remaining expenditures, it is essential that DARP leadership and campaign planners know how these monies are being applied to their effective communication program. To accomplish this, it is advisable to investigate and report on the status of the numbers and placement of print and broadcast materials that were outlined in DARP's correspondence of 25 January, 1992, and to continue this on a monthly basis. Since print media was distributed to provincial offices, a report on such dissemination should be a relatively straight forward task. Detailed information of this sort will not only be useful for DARP to show wise use of funds, but will be a good starting point for campaign leadership to begin assessing the effect of such media. Further expenditure of special project funds to support campaigns should be contingent on the results of these reports.

### **5.4 CHECK AND APPROVE PRINT MEDIA CONTENT & DESIGN**

On several occasions, TTD personnel representing activities in multi media campaign productions, had brought to DARP what was assumed to be camera ready copy for tendering printing work. Often, DARP staff would travel to Colombo to locate qualified print shops and obtain estimates, often getting involved in technical matters that were not part of DARP staff responsibility. When recent banners, posters and folders were in this process, various people in DOA would point out design and content errors after the job was in printing. Needless to say, job revisions are costly in budget, time, and human resources. Most importantly, to speed up process of printing crucial campaign messages in order to reach their audience on time, DOA must systematize a review and approval of such content and design before tendering for printing. It is recommended that any future tendering of printing work require a form be attached to all print jobs and contain initials of appropriate DOA staff to attest to job accuracy. TTD would be able to design a routing slip.

## **5.5 REPORT ON PROGRESS OF LOCAL ADVISOR/TRAINER AT FBS**

DOA had asked DARP to employ a local trainer experienced in radio broadcast writing and production. Acting on this, DARP was able to locate and help a well qualified staff member of SLBC secure a leave of absence without pay from employment to undertake a two month assignment in Colombo. While the advisor was able to coordinate local trainer's recruitment, subsequent employment and work plan development, major activities are proceeding as DARP phases out its programmatic input. To help finalize DARP's training program and reporting on its conclusion, it would be advisable for DOA and DARP to receive a final report from FBS that would include Technical Assistant Assignment progress in work plan, training accomplishments and a status of where each FBS staff is in their level of skills and recommendations on further training. This information will be valuable to DOA in formulating their overall staffing for future.

## **5.6 SEMINAR TO REVIEW THE PRESENT REPORT**

Since considerable investment was made by everyone to undertake and conclude a long-term program in extension communications, the conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are worthy of review.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS: THE CHALLENGE AHEAD**

Taking into account the expressed earlier for a sharper focus for DOA's extension communication program development, the advisor leaves behind a set of recommendations for consideration. Whether funding sources are from within the Sri Lanka community or from donor organizations, a strong commitment will be necessary for an effective system of dealing with the demands of the country's farmers and their families. Obviously, the realities of staff availability, time and budget resources will determine the degree for which these recommendations would be adopted.

After concluding DARP communication work plan activities, these tasks remain:

- \* setting up clientele advisory boards;
- \* evaluating communication campaigns;
- \* organizing staff and work flow;
- \* streamlining decision making and approvals for media work;
- \* adding to quality products;
- \* starting an employee development program;
- \* establishing public relations activities;
- \* setting up provincial communication system; and
- \* strengthening operational communication budget.

### **6.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNICATION ADVISORY BOARDS**

This past year, key managers of extension communication unit spent a month in USA partaking in day-to-day operations of a major land grant university extension communications service. In the US extension system, program issues are determined at the grass roots level through proven, effective, local advisory boards. The concept is simple: while the central government offers support in both funding and in organizing topical activities and media support, the major source of extension information activity is determined at the local or regional level through advisory boards. These boards are located at various levels, from village to province (county), and province to state. There are two-way linkages, since program planners and evaluators at each level communicate up and down the feedback ladder. Various kinds of people are recruited or volunteer to be on such boards. They are private people such as farmers, housewives, youth, bankers, small businessmen, radio station employees, etc. At such advisory board meetings, a single representative of the public extension service is in attendance but does not control the board or its meetings. This person becomes the channel of communication in passing information about local and decisions to the program planning and evaluating level located at the land grant university extension system. While nothing is fool-proof enough to guard against some members from obtaining preferential treatment in receiving program assistance, the advisory board system works well because local are expressed and programs are evaluated locally. Each member of the advisory board volunteers time to take up issues with various constituents in their own respective communities. This is a grass roots program.

In Alaska, USA, from where the DARP advisor was recruited, extension programs at the local level are represented through an advisory board at each of 12 district or regional centers. Its membership consists of native Alaskans, of recently arrived settlers from rest of USA, and of descendants of long settled Europeans. Its members are from public and private sector. Meetings are convened regularly to review progress, plans and evaluations of four basic extension areas: agricultural technology; women programs (home economics); youth leadership development (4-H); and community organization. While a person in Sri Lanka's tropical world would have to stretch the imagination to compare to an arctic agricultural situation, the system of organizing the community remains the same world wide: getting people organized, working, and communicating together. This times out well with Sri Lanka's program of decentralizing government since the advisory board approach would be a good step toward total community involvement.

DOA has the potential to carry out a successful extension communication program with the establishment of similar boards. With a central government administering its national extension program, and with the availability to link up with provincial and interprovincial representation, a Sri Lanka Extension Communication Advisory Board system could be established over the next 12 months at both national and provincial levels.

At the provincial level, an advisory board could be charged with routinely canvassing problem oriented of farmers and their families covering a range of agricultural technologies and other where DOA services might benefit them. At this point, we cannot suggest any definite method of canvassing, except by whatever means individuals can apply. Personal knowledge and contacts is the key.

Beginning at the provincial level, an advisory board should include a maximum of six members. Three might be from the public sector and three from the private sector. It would be most desirable to have at least one member at each province be a woman, to represent issues of the farm family. While every effort should be made to find public sector representatives from non-DOA organizations, at least one member could be a DOA employee to provide necessary linkage and reporting between the provincial advisory board and national board. Short of direct board membership, then a provincial DOA representative would be present at board meetings to report back to DOA. In event a DOA staff becomes a board member, by no means should that person chair the board. Provincial advisory boards would convene monthly to take up ongoing issues relative to how various programs are meeting in the respective provinces, and communicating results back to national boards. The Department's initial role would be to help get such boards organized, but should play a minimal role in formulating specific missions and tasks for the local level. DOA could play a significant role in finding appropriate people, and help set up such boards through conducting workshops over the course of a year. Once membership is established at each province, members will need to elect a chairperson, formulate mission statements, decide on the responsibilities of its members, set up systems to routinely assess ongoing farmer for information, and draw up a list of equipment and supplies needed by board members to carry out their activities.

The National Extension Communication Advisory Board, to be located at Peradeniya, could consist of nine members broken down as follows: Three members elected from any of the provincial boards, whether they be employees of public or private organizations; three from private sector not serving on provincial boards; and three from the DOA. DOA membership might include a member from a specific technology division, one representative from field demonstrations, and one from communication unit. The national communication advisory board would also meet monthly. Major functions of the national board would be to review expressed by clientele for ongoing information, track progress of ongoing national communication campaigns, increase knowledge of the clientele profile, and determine ways in which media can help get across national programs with desired results. This board would not deal with specifics of media development and content design, but would communicate its findings and progress to staff through normal staff meetings. The national board could also develop a mission statement, assign job tasks, and develop its two-way communication channels between national and provincial boards and communicate findings to various technical divisions inside DOA.

Membership in all advisory boards should be for definite periods, say 2 or 3 years only. Each year then, 2-3 members of each board would rotate out and new members would replace them.

Resources will be needed to launch this system of advisory boards, but any investment in this direction is one worth pursuing. To help launch extension communication advisory boards, it would be good to locate Sri Lankan experts who might have experience in setting up such advisory boards. The university and business community would be good places to look. Short of that, it might be a wise investment to utilize future donor funding to help seek a trainer experienced in community organizational development, even if foreign TA has to be sought. There are many such experienced people within the USA cooperative extension services whose very jobs include conducting workshops for public and private groups which are organizing advisory boards for the first time. US Department of Agriculture's Extension Division at Washington, DC is a good source to inquire, or from any land grant university extension sources DOA staff may know personally.

## **6.2 ASSESSING COMMUNICATION IMPACTS: A Management Tool**

To use the mass media effectively, one must begin with a staff of creative and technical persons who can produce and access the mass media with well designed and technically accurate messages that have impact. DOA is well on the way in accomplishing that. It is also necessary to have media managers with planning and implementing skills that are needed to keep a complex program on schedule. This is being achieved as its key managers continue to receive further training and experience in sharpening their focus on synchronizing mass media with events and in the field. However, the key to assessing effective use of mass media lies outside Peradeniya.

Two kinds of assessments to evaluate communications programming are:

- 1) Quick assessments in the field of ongoing campaign message reception, and
- 2) overall impact evaluation that will determine if the campaign itself did anything to affect change.

The aim of the first is to find out if specific messages are reaching intended audiences, and with what kind of results. If anything is wrong, corrections can be made to message design and dissemination channel, and continue with campaign. There are several methods of assessing impact that are available:

- 1) Traditional questionnaire to obtain benchmark data that compares conditions of technology use and media preferences before and after campaigns;
- 2) one or several short field visits to 20-40 farmers to observe technology usage, and informal questioning to learn whether or not farmers are receiving the messages and what they think about them;
- 3) in-depth "focus groups" of farmer groups of similar people who will speak openly about a topic; and
- 4) "people on the street" or market intercept interviews which require surveyors placed in various locations frequented farmers to obtain short answers about a topic.

Use of video and print media are excellent to open focus group discussions. This method requires trained group leaders, and would be applied when it appears that traditional survey questionnaire methods may not be yielding true responses. Also, this is a good way to test some media samples such as a poster and video clip to see reactions to the kind of media that is being considered for use during the campaigns.

The methods to apply in conducting ongoing multi media campaigns depend again on desired feedback and resources. However, a "before and after" evaluation of some kind is required to make any intelligent estimation as to whether or not a campaign is effective. To begin, benchmark indicators are already available to start the assessments. "Baseline Survey to Launch Multi Media Campaigns" highlights two technology issues: how growers protect themselves using pesticides, and how they alternate cropping in paddy fields in Yala season. The survey also has updated information on how farmers receive agricultural information. While DOA can refine survey instrument for future use, it now has enough valuable data to start. It is recommended that Multi Media Campaign Coordinating Team consider a number of activities over the next 12 months that would put tighter focus on campaign coordination and begin assessing results. It is also recommended that pesticide safety and OFC campaigns continue throughout 1993 and terminate at a time to be determined in 1994. Due to the magnitude of both topics, a one year assessment will not be a true indicator of mass media effectiveness, but can certainly be

considered as a year of useful implementation and sharpening of focus.

DAEP has now been assigned to undertake campaign assessments. Qualified staff of that Division can apply the methods and survey instruments it wishes. However, it is recommended that activities follow as such:

- 1) Team review survey report, pp 35-36, "Possible Indicators for Monitoring" and set up a calendar of assessments and possible actions to support campaigns.
- 2) A short assessment instrument be designed and produced for use in conducting short on-farm visits during ongoing pesticide & OFC campaigns. This instrument will be used as a guide only for use during period of message dissemination, combining observations with short focused questions. A sample of an observational tool is contained as an appendix in the survey report mentioned earlier.
- 3) Begin implementing assessments. This is not an impact assessment, but a look at how messages are being received. There is no need to visit many farmers. No magic number is available, but experienced communication researchers say 30-40 might be a good number to get an idea how the campaigns are running. Since pesticide safety and diversification concern paddy farmers, it would be wise to consider assessing both topics simultaneously. A combination of observation and short informal questionnaire can be utilized, putting farmer and visitor at ease. One or several pilot areas within a province where pesticide use and OFC activity is high would be sufficient. Here is where provincial staff assistance can be an excellent opportunity to strengthen linkage for central and provincial cooperation.
- 4) Evaluate quick assessment results. If it appears that farmers are not receiving broadcasts or have not seen print materials, action must be taken to correct the timing and placement of the materials. That would entail only re-scheduling broadcast time, or changing the location of the print materials. However, if audiences are saying they do not understand messages, or worse yet, are negatively affected by the message, then media staff will have to redesign and produce a new version for re-dissemination. The campaign could stop at this point, due to budget limitations, especially if testing messages is all that is intended. However, if a campaign to use pesticides safely is a real concern and goal, along with a concern to help raise standard of living for paddy farmers by crop diversification, taking further action to correct and continue campaigns to conclusion is a wise investment.
- 5) When media materials are expected to be a costly investment, it is wise to conduct a "media test" before making final investment of staff, materials, budget and time. However, during a campaign, if it appears the messages are not effective, perhaps there are reasons that are psychological or are based on religion or beliefs. In this case, farmers are not practising the technology recommendations and DOA would be in position to find out why not. A method

to gain further insight is to apply the "focus group" methodology. Several kinds of media can be tested on a representative group can be an effective way of getting into the minds and hearts of the target audience. This is an excellent method to test not only the message designs, but to find out more about how the audience feels about the topic at hand. A possible format would include a gathering of small groups of 6-10 persons of similar status, income level, with no one domineering the group. Between 45 minutes to two hours might be required, depending on the topic and amount of media displayed. A trained group leader with knowledge of group dynamics would conduct the group and keep the discussion on track. An assistant, out of obtrusive distance, would record the proceedings by note pad or on audio cassette. The DOA poster, "pesticide suicide" might be an excellent tool to use in starting the group talking about the topic. During the discussion, the poster can be evaluated as well. A short video clip of the intended "Safe Use of Pesticide" might be another excellent choice in topic and media testing. For pesticide safety campaign, several groups could be assembled representing various kinds of audiences for this complex topic: labourers who actually do spraying; farmers who make decisions on use of pesticides and employ sprayers; a group of school teachers; school children; shop keepers who sell pesticides. Evaluation of focus groups would yield considerable information to help design or re-design messages, and be a good indication of whether or not campaign has chance to succeed. This kind of group gathering combining central and provincial staff is an excellent way to get closer to the clientele and learn how media utilization plays a role in group meetings, an activity that extension agents world-wide are engaged in. It's also another way for the Department to obtain exposure as a proactive organization.

- 6) Continue campaign, according to schedule, and determine its campaign life. Availability of resources will determine the degree that each communication program can afford to run. As DOA determines that present pesticide safety issues in the campaign are worth pursuing further, then level of communication activity should proceed another year. However, if one or more assessments prove that a change in topic focus, or termination of a campaign is necessary, then action can be taken according to priorities. The assessments, thus, are intended not only to measure message reception and campaign effectiveness, but also to help planners budget for the right mix of communication activity for the communication manager to plan the following year's work plan.
- 7) Work Plan for 1994 can incorporate ongoing multi media campaigns into normal routine work agenda, according to the kind of impacts being achieved as measured by assessments. DOA leadership will have to determine what mixture of communication topics are important in each subsequent work plan year. Topics on pesticide safety are so numerous that one could incorporate this as a campaign for ten years. And since pesticide usage occurs throughout the Maha and Yala seasons, communication activity can be scheduled throughout each year. Other campaigns involving more seasonal topics and issues would have to be more tightly scheduled, with assessments being more carefully planned.

## **6.3 STAFF AND WORK FLOW ORGANIZATION**

A clear idea of who does what and how things get done in technology transfer communications to be understood and communicated so that staff and clientele know what kind of services and accessibility they have to DOA's diverse programs. Anything to be published that describes the structure of extension communications organization would need to be preceded by a careful examination of present structure, and, where appropriate, changes would need to occur to streamline the flow of work.

### **6.3.1 Topic Selection**

The concept of mass media campaigns is not to add to the work load of the communications unit, but instead to provide focus to the regular work that is being carried out. Shaping the work load into only 3-4 main areas of concentration around "campaigns" requires a process of prioritization. It is expected that once advisory board inputs begin to formulate and express technology transfer and public relations for communications work, a more realistic set of priorities will be established and programd accordingly. Whatever the source of work load determinations, it should be recognized that the particular topics selected for the campaigns are a few of many broad topic areas in today's spotlight as world-wide issues facing agricultural extension.

### **6.3.2 Staffing**

There is an urgent need to bring key decision making staff under one roof. Since constructing a new extension communication center at Peradeniya large enough to accommodate the entire staff may be out of the question at this point in time, there are other methods to consider that entail some minor shifting of staff locations and streamlining task oriented meetings of key personnel.

Current organizational chart shows a breakdown of staff dealt with in this report (Appendix 1). However, at the completion of this assignment, there were a few staff changes suggested: adding a person to head up a Monitoring & Evaluation section, relocating some FBS staff to Peradeniya and, as will be described in a later section, adding a DOA extension communication presence at select provinces. (See Appendix 2.)

Present staff who currently form the communications unit of TTD are directly engaged as publication writer/editors, radio and TV broadcasters, graphic designers, printers, photographers and videographers. These are people who write, draw, colour, paste, shoot, edit and narrate a variety of print and electronic media materials for DOA. They are well trained and creative in what they do. These people are needed to continue present work, and for what may very well be increased work load in the future. Four persons form key coordinating roles in the various sections of media work, as involved in ongoing campaigns. Some of them have received prior training in communications & management and some have not. Here, we can highlight to strengthen each extension communication section:

- Monitoring & Evaluation: There is an urgent need for a key person to help plan, coordinate, test, assess and advise on the work load and projects that will keep this group well occupied in the years to come. Technology Transfer Division has expressed need for Monitoring & Evaluation "cell" within this division. While it appears DAEP will be undertaking assessments of ongoing DARP-sponsored multi media campaigns, it can hardly be expected that a non-extension communication group will be in position to undertake the number and breadth of activities that will be ongoing.

- FBS: Since the devolution of extension appears irreversible, and since we are proposing a decentralized approach to input and evaluation extension communications processes, it may be wise to consider a more effective "spreading out" of DOA broadcast services as well. Topping the list of locations would obviously be Peradeniya, where technical divisions of the DOA are already located. Since family considerations must be taken into consideration, a gradual phasing in of those who are primarily writers and content gatherers would be a logical beginning, such as two or four such persons to Peradeniya. These FBS content gatherers and editors need to be close to specialists and farmers, perhaps more centrally accessed from Kandy. There is no question the studio is needed, in Colombo where remaining staff of some six editors and on air hosts would be close to SLBC and would be in position to manage their own program through the assistant coordinator who would remain at Colombo. Procedure would be that FBS Colombo staff will receive field audio recordings from Peradeniya staff and do the actual editing at the new studio with narration, music and sound effects. Staff who relocates to Peradeniya would be in position to access the audio studio of AV Center, thus doubling output of completed programs.

- AV Center: This unique group of specialists are charged with a tremendous work load from shooting and processing 35mm photographs, setting up award winning exhibits, drawing posters to producing broadcast quality videos. There are no doubts about the technical qualifications of these persons, since advisor has just completed training activities with the video unit. However, during the past twelve months, AV Center staff had been dedicated to the recent Gam Udava exhibit that, took almost three months of work, shutting down just about any other meaningful activity. It is apparent that the expectations to pull entire units away from other important work will lessen the capability for any ongoing multi media campaigns to contain timely, updated materials such as video programs, slide shows and posters. Therefore, this unit's leadership should provide ongoing inputs into routine communication workload assignment planning and be permitted to advise TTD management on its unit's technical and human resources capability as arise.

- Publications Editorial: Five publication editors who write and edit a variety of DOA publications and periodicals form the main print media section. Supported by a pool of some 30 typists, the editorial staff has recently been strengthened by the procurement of two Apple MacIntosh computers that will streamline the publications process. One of the editors is a member of the communication coordinating team, so this linkage is present under one roof, being that the editors are located within the DOA offices at Peradeniya. With the interest shown in

conducting multi media campaigns, while attempting to maintain normal workload it is crucial an editorial representative with decision making authority is represented at all key decision making meetings where print media work would impact this section.

### **6.3.3 Work Flow Coordination**

At present, other than regularly scheduled meetings which usually do not take up communication and media issues, the "ad hoc" method of assigning of work load appears to be the norm. While key managers in extension communication unit meet occasionally to discuss ongoing work load matters, physical separation, along with unreliable phone service make it extremely difficult to conduct business in a timely fashion. While a staff of six publications editors with their large typing pool staff are under one roof, other key coordinators are not so accessible. The coordinator for Farm Broadcast Service, a crucial link, is located in Colombo where he supervises some 12 radio & TV editorial staff. The Audiovisual Center director is located with his staff in a building some three kilometres away to require vehicle or phone service to communicate for media coordination. Print shop staff are also located in a separate building, again three kilometres from central communication office.

Multi Media Campaign Coordinating Team should continue after DARP's conclusion. These meetings should be held weekly, although brief with an agenda followed. All coordinators representing various sections should be asked to attend. Meeting "minutes" would be written and copied to DD and others as to the progress made on important activities and future plans. Publishing a "Who's Who" guide about extension communications services and staff would also be helpful.

### **6.3.4 Describing Services to the DOA**

Many organizations publish a description of its organization and services through a "Users' Guide", in this case to "Technology Transfer Communications". This could be easily put together on new desktop equipment, and used as part of an employee development program. This in-house communication tool could be an artistically designed booklet or flyer to help clarify misconceptions on who does what and how amongst the extension-communication staff and the channel in which work gets accomplished.

## **6.4 DELEGATING DECISION MAKING & STREAMLINING APPROVALS**

Suggestions on ways to streamline decision making and obtaining approvals to access other divisions within DOA were previously addressed. The need is obvious, for some delegation of authority concerning editorial staff access to other divisions to obtain content or information in order to write news stories. Going through official channels each time a story is to be prepared would render any timely public information service useless.

#### 6.4.1 Decision Making

While it is necessary to relay the policies and issues dealt by the DA and DD to TT division staff, it might permit smoother operations by leaving daily design and technical decisions on a media product to its mid level managers and technical staff. Unless a communication task is of such magnitude that DOA's public image or program success would be grossly affected by the material, the organization should permit a delegation of decision making responsibility to its staff of experts who are able to do the work. Matters dealing with specific work tasks and production units should be left to those hired to handle such matters. Anything short of that would hamper work progress, sabotage organizational process and affect employee morale.

#### 6.4.2 Approvals

There are two other management related issues that affect the accomplishment of communication work flow, and both are related to accessing various persons within a unit and with various divisions.

- "Blanket" Approval for Information Sources: When an editor wishes to gather content from a researcher or information on plant quarantine from a Plant Protection officer, there should be an understanding and prior agreement made in DD meetings, that such contacts are permitted without requiring the respective DD approval. That is, there should be a "blanket" approval made that the editorial and media development staff should be able to call on a technically qualified person within any division to gather technical content to write a publication or a TV script. A press release may even require faster access to the appropriate content specialist, since the story may require quick release to the media. It would be assumed that the appropriate DD's would be informed of such activity through its own division's system of routinely communicating activity being carried out by staff.

To facilitate a system to allow access to each division by editors and media specialists within DOA, the DA might consider writing a blanket letter of approval for such accessing of DOA content specialist staff. Each DD would be in position to discuss the particulars of whatever problems or issues that might surface for such access, but those details can be ironed out. The aim is to facilitate rapid story development so that communications to the media can be carried out without unnecessary delays.

- Content & Design Approval: The other approval system that to be considered is a check list of those responsible for a given media product to show their review and agreement that such message is accurate and ready for final preparation. Obviously, this may not be feasible in the press release function; but for poster designs, banner slogans, content layout for flyers, a video script, or a video tape ready for final special effects by a Colombo video facility, those who are responsible for the accuracy and design of the material should display their approval by initialising a routing slip that accompanies each product going to an outside vendor. Following this procedure would avoid expensive revisions and cancelling a job that may already have been started by a printing shop.

## 6.5 ESTABLISHING A PROVINCIAL PRESENCE FOR EXTENSION COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to establishing provincial advisory boards so that clientele can express their for extension information, an additional linkage should be considered: the employment of, or cross training of, a provincial level officer to represent the DOA's extension communication program. This person would assist DOA in conducting assessments and evaluating results through participating in audience surveys, produce some 35mm slides and photographs, video tapes and radio interviews, write press releases, and offer other staff training in communications when necessary. In a sense, this person would be an extension of all communication sections: AV, FBS, and Publications. An investment would need to be made in transportation, media equipment, media stock, a FAX machine, desktop computer with printer, and a sustainable operating budget. This person would be cross-trained to perform all functions. Along with development of advisory boards, this, too, would be another important area to consider for further donor activity.

## 6.6 INSTITUTING EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In the past, many organizations world-wide viewed employee development as a luxury, just as were the opinions of top level executives about having communication units. However, now that most organizations realize the value of having an in-house image making unit to use for good propaganda, such managers now realize that having employees with good morale is one of the key strengths to an organization's success. Like using communications media, satisfied employees tell others outside good things about the organization. DOA is no stranger to helping develop good employee morale. The advisor observed this at "New Year's Day" festivities at ISTI. Here, employees in attendance, participated in sports, folk singing, drum beating contests, and soft refreshments. A few other steps might be sufficient to build up such a program and fit into day to day operations:

- 1) An In House Employee Newsletter that is intended for DOA employees only. Four pages total would suffice; anything longer than that would become "a job" and detract from the good effort made towards the "News In Brief", which has wider circulation and is quite technical in nature. Such a newsletter would concentrate on people, their jobs and personal accomplishments. It could also focus on humour as well. After one year, a prize could be awarded for the most humorous study. The new Apple-MacIntosh electronic publication equipment available would get considerable use from this kind of effort, since the use of scanners to incorporate photographs would illustrate employees as well in the newsletter.
- 2) Allow employees to join local and international associations relevant to their careers. For the extension communication staff, there are three potential organizations that can be recommended in USA:

Agricultural Communicators In Education (ACE)- USDA/ES, Washington, DC.  
Originating out of US extension system at all land grant university extension

communication programs, this is a large organization that publishes newsletters, membership catalog, and holds annual conventions. It has one of the fastest growing international components recent convention dealt with communicating cross culturally. Program organizers at various land grant universities are always searching for guest speakers and workshop participants. This would be an excellent opportunity for Sri Lankan professionals to expand their contributions to an international association. Supporting membership for DOA communications staff and sending representatives to the next convention in USA would be a good start.

Association for Educational Communications & Technology (AECT), Washington, DC. While this organization deals more with university and public school communicators and media librarians, the advisor knows, through personal membership, that this organization also has a growing international component. Its annual conventions at various locations around the USA have an exhibition of media equipment and media services almost as large as the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB).

International Television Association (ITVA), Dallas, Texas. This organization has world wide membership and country programs all over the world. The ITVA is ideal for all kinds of media communicators working for hospitals, government, universities and private industry where in-house media units deal with training, public relations and news. Annual conventions in USA and other world wide locations.

If membership and attendance at an international convention appear unattainable for this year, communication staff should be encouraged to inquire locally if any such association specific to communications exists in the country, and, if so, to join in membership. If none exists, here is a chance to develop one's skills as an organizer and start such an association in Sri Lanka. Having pioneered such an association in the past, the advisor believes that in the beginning, the key to a successful start-up is fellowship through social meetings, then gradually build the agenda to include an occasional guest speaker to address a technical or creative issue in the work. The group could affiliate with the Sri Lanka Agricultural Extension Association.

- 3) The release of a publication describing DOA's extension communication services could be coincided with an "Open House". This might be a challenge considering FBS facility is at Colombo, AV Center and Print Shop are at Gannoruwa, but a one open house could be arranged at various facilities at a time when all sections can display some of their best products. An "Open House" is for special guests, dignitaries, donors, and employees to tour a facility, see the process of a job task, review some products and visit with the staff. If going to all locations is impossible, then a representative of FBS, AV Center, Print Shop, and Publication sections could be present in a central location with products and indexes of other products available. This could also be coincided with workshops for employees.

- 4) Further training of staff in technical areas will be required at the conclusion of DARP extension communication technical assistant assignment. Most important is the following hands-on training that is needed: desktop publishing for publication staff; use of special effects and video editing for AV Center; radio studio production and editing once new recording studio and equipment is present for FBS; and, monitoring and evaluating multi media campaigns through learning various survey techniques described earlier.

## 6.7 EXPANDING GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS

In June, 1992, DD/TT, working in consultation with staff and DARP advisor, developed a plan of action to "Create a Public Awareness for DOA". A draft document of the plan was prepared and disseminated to DA and DD's. This plan, was an attempt by TTD to organize for an expanded use of mass media for this purpose. Ministry of Agricultural Development & Research had been inquiring on this matter. It is encouraging to see that DOA can organize quickly and come up with a matrix of multi media usage to meet certain target audiences, as contained in the draft document. The advisor agrees with TTD in considering the content in the document but advises this should be incorporated into technology transfer program matrix of a similar nature, and based on inputs received through provincial advisory boards.

In addition to a master plan for public awareness, and an "Open House" where general public would also be invited to attend, there are a number of other important public relations activities that are equally important:

- Press Release Service: a low cost, effective public relations service that communicates timely information about an organization's activities, people, and future events. One editor can routinely query a representative of each division about upcoming events, workshops, research findings and write up a brief summary for dissemination to newspaper, SLBC, and other interested organizations having public information services. The details must be worked out as to a review and approval process, but whatever system is agreed on, it must be a quick process so that timely information is not disseminated after a deadline. DOA has previous experience in writing press releases. Staff should design an attractive logo on paper stock for publication of all press releases. Cost would be in materials and postage.
- Annual report: This is also an effective tool to tell the public about DOA, and to be done in a way that non-agriculturists will understand and want to read. While one of the greatest challenges to an editor is to make highly technical content interesting to non technical people, this must be done to reach those important decision makers who need to know what DOA has done in a brief, highly visual way. Thus, an annual report should contain information about the organization's mission, its strategy to meet ever-changing markets, its program areas, accomplishments, and its vision for the future and its role in a changing world. The design should be simple and free of clutter.
- Increase prime time access to broadcast media: This will require negotiating with

SLBC but if DOA can submit any number of short fillers and news clips of 1-3 minutes in length, there should be no charges for supplying a news service with information about the country's food sources. As for spot announcements, this may be costly, but it's an effective way to promote services and tell about accomplishments in a highly visual way.

## 6.8 TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND OPERATING BUDGET

Along with a well organized and highly skilled staff of professionals capable of doing their jobs as extension communicators, we should consider a few technical areas that need improvements as well.

- **Publications:** As editorial staff becomes more proficient in using desktop publishing equipment, it might be wise to add a word processing computer for each of the five editors. These would be used in preparing content, and saving it on disk. Layout staff would be new publications computers would be free to use present two new computers for design and layout. This would speed up the process of preparing publications for printing. Present method of preparing copy by hand is time consuming and outdated. If editorial staff improvement in typing skills, advisor recommends training be provided. Operating budget must consider adequate supply of high quality paper stock, computer diskettes, disk drive cleaner kit, covers for equipment, and means to pay for equipment servicing when maintenance warranty expires.

- **Print Shop:** The TT division was able to show through cost effective comparisons that having its own printing services was less expensive than procuring from outside vendor. Time did not permit DARP to focus much attention on the operations of this section. However, since DOA has a sizable investment in staff, equipment, and maintenance in this section, some attention should be focused on this neglected entity soon.

- **FBS:** A computer and FAX machine are urgently needed for staff. Staff of 12 have no usable typewriter so everything is done by hand. FBS also has no means to communicate scripts or program designs to Peradeniya other than through mail. This major extension communication entity word processing capability, and the means to send and receive urgent materials between Colombo and Peradeniya.

- **FBS Regional Services:** Time constraints and requirements to serve DOA central services did not permit advisor to address the issue of strengthening FBS regional centres.

- **AV Center:** Having spent considerable time in this section, advisor agrees with ADA that some strengthening is urgently needed here. This unit is charged with plenty of hands-on production work of photographs, graphics and video materials. Over a year ago, DARP had assisted in a sizable procurement of Broadcast equipment to enable this section to begin producing programs for both SLBC and field extension programs. However, the AV Center has been unable to complete work due to a few missing components. While DOA is in process of procuring a special effects

generator to add visual interest to programs, the equipment configuration is missing a video cable to connect up two editing decks to allow editing. Eventually, a switcher unit ("Vision Mixer" in British jargon) will be necessary so that finished master tapes can have fades and dissolves included in the completed programs instead of simple cut edits between shot transitions. The switcher would require about a US \$ 20,000 investment. Without the switcher, AV Center will have to seek such services from a vendor in Colombo. An audio mixer for incorporating recorded music, narrations and sound effects into video programs during editing is urgently needed. The FBS in Colombo has two such mixers. One should be transferred to the AV Centre.

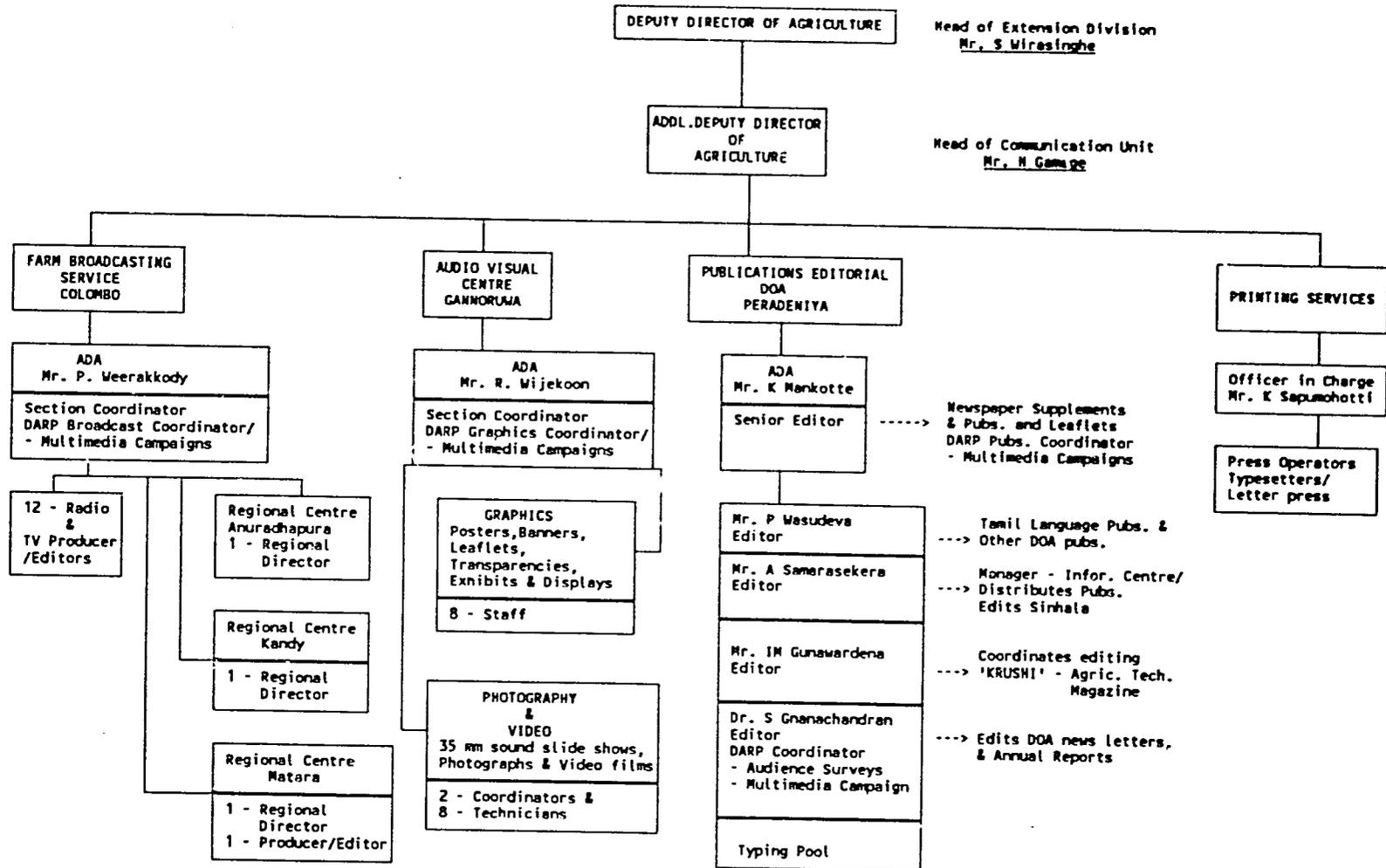
## **7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

This report shows DARP concurrence with DOA's need to expand the use of mass media, but cautions that this be done through coordinated planning. While human resources are capable of managing and carrying out media production and dissemination as proven by the diligence shown in conducting multi media campaigns, further guidance and focus will be necessary to manage as a team effort, both within TTD and with other divisions. Expansion of mass media utilization is worthwhile as long as provincial inputs are present and work is coordinated in a professional and proficient manner with organizations outside the DOA. Recommendations contained in this report should allow the Department to achieve success through supporting organizational linkages and sustaining an acceptable public image.

# PRESENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

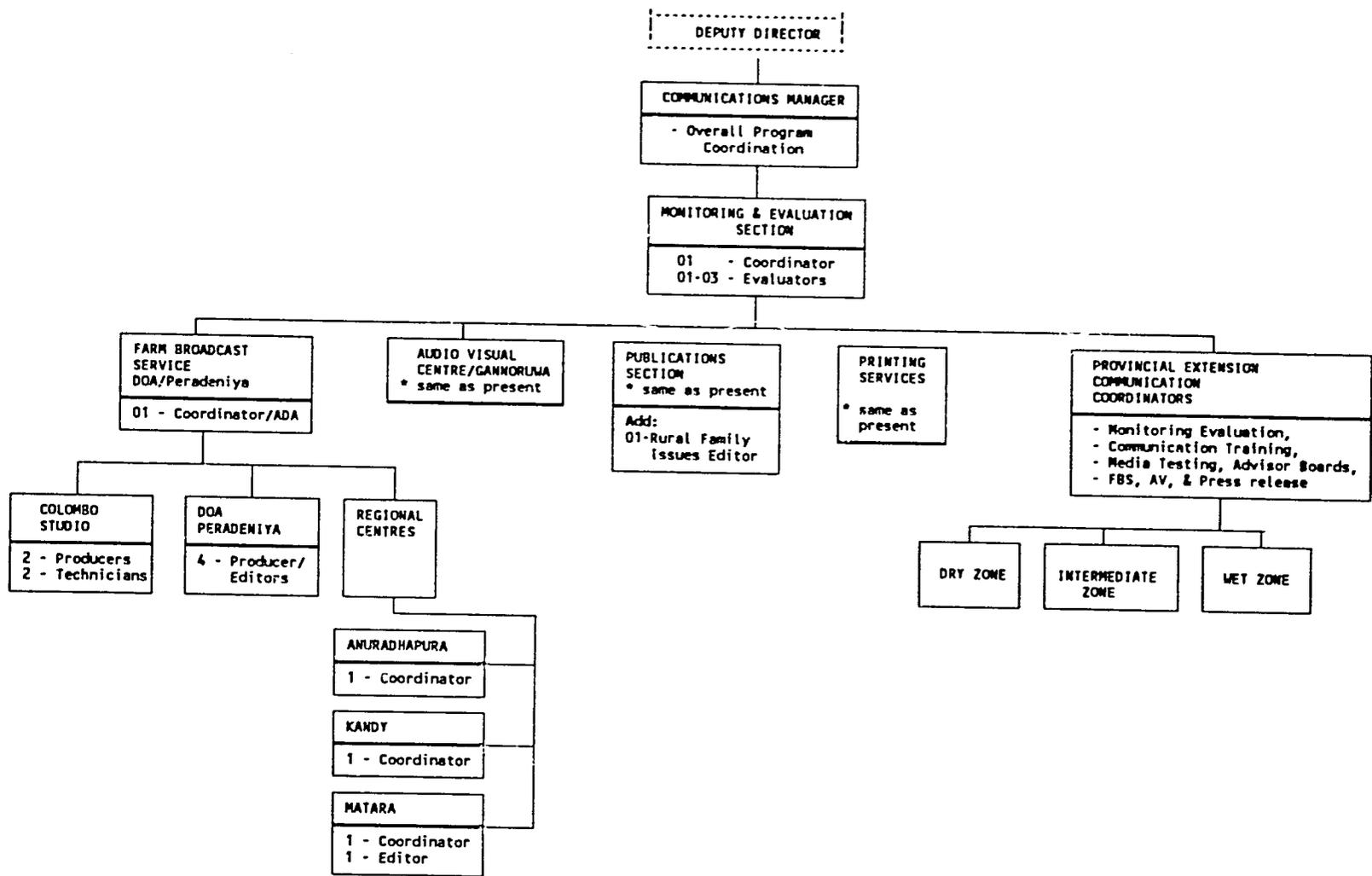
## TTD COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

APPENDIX 1.



# PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF DOA EXTENSION COMMUNICATION SERVICES

APPENDIX 2.



**APPENDIX 3.**

**PRINCIPAL CONSULTANCY COLLABORATORS  
AND  
ASSOCIATES**

Sri Lanka Department of Agriculture

Technology Transfer Division:

Mr. S. Wirasinghe/DD (TTD Director)  
Mr. H. Gamage/ADD (Communications Manager)  
Mr. P.W. Weerakkody/ADA (Farm Broadcast Service Coordinator)  
Mr. K. Mankotte/ADA (Publications Section Coordinator)  
Mr. R. Wijekoon/AD/ (Audio Visual Center Coordinator)  
Dr. S. Gnanachandran/ADA (Publications Editor)  
Mr. T.M.A. Tennakoon/ADD (Field Block Demonstrations)

Economics & Planning Division:

Mr. G. Balasooriya/Agricultural Economist

US Agency for International Development

Agriculture & Natural Resources Office:

Mr. Glen Anders/Agriculture Program Director  
Mr. Gary Alex/Agriculture Officer  
Mr. S. H. Charles/Agricultural Specialist

DARP PROJECT STAFF

Dr. Preston S. Pattie/Chief of Party  
Dr. Sydney Kirinde/Deputy Chief of Party  
Mr. Upali Dahanayake  
Mr. S Srikantan  
Mrs. Shirley Amunugama  
Ms. Khema Senanayake  
Mrs. Dyani Kapuwatte  
Ms. Mirmala Nadaraja  
Ms. Chamari Kulatunge

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. John P. Snell/Program Officer  
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations  
  
Ms. Lee Montcaster/Country Program Director  
CARE International/Sri Lanka  
  
Mr. Tilak Jayaratne  
Controller for Educational Broadcasting  
Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation  
  
Dr. Buddhi Weerasinghe  
Director, Educational Technology  
The Open University of Sri Lanka

Private Sector

Mr. Authauda Jayawardne/Chairman  
Pesticide Association of Sri Lanka  
Chemical Industries, Colombo  
  
Mr. Ravindralal Peiris/General Manager  
Wijaya Graphics/Apple-MacIntosh Dealer  
  
Dr. Milroy S. Perera  
Technical Director  
Resources Development Consultants, Ltd.  
Colombo

APPENDIX 4.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVINCES OF SRI LANKA

Reference:

1. SOUTHERN PROVINCE - SP
2. WESTERN PROVINCE - WP
3. SABARAGAMUWA PROVINCE - SBP
4. UVA PROVINCE - UVAP
5. CENTRAL PROVINCE - CP
6. NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE -NWP
7. NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE-NCP
8. NORTHERN PROVINCE-NP
9. EASTERN PROVINCE - EP

\* District Boundary ---

\* Provinces Boundary \_\_\_\_\_

● FBS CENTRES

