

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON FOOD COMPOSITION
STUDIES IN SRI LANKA

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Rice is the main carbohydrate source for the people of Sri Lanka. Most of the wheat flour requirement for bread making is imported. The main protein sources available in the country are fish, meat and meat products, eggs and pulses. Soya based products are of recent entry into the country. Access to the animal protein sources depends on socio-economic factors. An array of tropical fruits are available in the country. Sri Lanka imports in descending order of quality wheat flour, sugar and rice and relatively small amounts of condensed and powdered milk. A variety of feeds including tea and coconut, are also exported. These include mostly sea foods, fruit-based products and coconut-based products as well as spices. Fresh vegetables have also entered the export trade recently.

CURRENT STUDIES ON FOOD COMPOSITION

None of the Research Institutes or the analytical laboratories has an on going project on Foods Composition Studies at present. The Chemistry department of the University of Sri Jayawardenepura recently launched on a compositional study project of certain fruits and vegetables growing in Sri Lanka. These varieties were also found to influence an in-vitro immune test system in another research project that this department is involved with.

FOOD COMPOSITION TABLES

The food tables used today in Sri Lanka is the one compiled for the Nutrition department of the M.R.I. in 1979. This has been compiled with the assistance from WHO and according to the compilers most of the data on fish and about 10% of the other data are the only works on Sri Lankan varieties. The rest of the data are mostly from Indian publications.

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USERS OF FOOD COMPOSITION TABLES

In Sri Lanka Food Composition tables are used by nutritionists, paediatricians and other medical personnel, dieticians, Nutrition educators, Food and Nutrition policy planning division.

Sri Lanka has very few nutritionists and Paediatricians. The F and NPP division of the Ministry of Plan Implementation uses these tables in computing per capita calorie intake and other statistical computations such as per Capita Food availability.

Food composition studies in Sri Lanka will be discussed taking the above factors into consideration.