

Black Pepper Project – Gahalakoladeniya Grama Niladhari Division

Gahalakoladeniya Grama Niladhari Division in the Yakkalamulla Divisional Secretary Division is an area with a large number of pepper farmers. One of the major problems confronted by villagers was the absence of a technology based standardized method to separate berries from spikes and the inability produce and sell standardized black pepper during the rainy season as the berries cannot be properly dried.

With a view to addressing this problem, the above project was implemented employing the concept of social entrepreneurship.

A machine for removing berries from spikes and dehydrator machine for drying berries to the correct standard were provided to villagers. During the off season of pepper cultivation, it was planned to use the dehydrator for the dehydration of local vegetables such as jack, breadfruit, brinjals etc. To ensure the sustainability of the project, a copra cutting machine too was provided for producing coconut oil as coconut is found in abundance in the area and during the off season of pepper and jack and breadfruit, coconut cut using the copra cutting machine is to be dried using the dehydrator for the extraction of oil.

All three machines provided for the project are installed at Gemi Diriya community hall in Gahalakoladeniya. As the news of the project spread, pepper cultivators from other Grama Niladhari divisions of the Divisional Secretary Division too have started arriving at Gahalakoladeniya to have pepper berries separated from spikes and dried.

A fund is maintained to maintain the machines and pay electricity and water bills and for the separation and drying of pepper berries Rs. 12/- is charged. For the use of coconut cutting machine, the fee levied is Rs. 7/- and for dehydrating vegetables and fruits Rs. 7/- is charged.

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