

SMALL FARMER ASSOCIATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

THE GALGAMUWA PILOT PROJECT
(KURUNEGALA, SRI LANKA)



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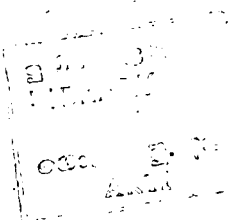
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A Review of Progress

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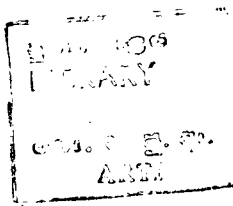
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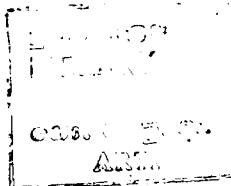
SMALL FARMER ASSOCIATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT - GALGAMUWA
AGRICULTURAL SERVICES CENTRE AREA - KURUNEGALA DISTRICT

Introduction:

In the last three decades, the development of agriculture in Sri Lanka was considered more or less synonymous with an increase in paddy production. The introduction of new high-yielding varieties was hailed as a major advance, but little thought was given to the small farmer, cultivating a small plot of land, unable to cope with the demands of the new technology and who became increasingly impoverished. Along with the overall increase in production, one had to ensure that the small farmer who formed the major proportion of the rural community, also benefited in terms of living standards, health and nutrition. Thus agricultural growth is only one aspect of rural development. However, due to the pivotal position of agriculture in the economy, it was often considered expedient to examine ways and means of improving the welfare of the rural sector, primarily by increasing agricultural productivity.

The Beminiwatta Field Laboratory:

The concept of integrated rural development, with its socio-economic overtones, had to supersede the narrow view of development as measured merely in terms of production statistics. This new approach to rural development was experimented, with by the Agrarian Research & Training Institute (ARTI) as early as 1972 in a selected area in the mid-country of Sri Lanka called the Beminiwatte Agricultural Production Committee (APC) area. It was an attempt to operationalise the concept of integrated rural development in a rural setting taking into account the available local resources and the socio-economic constraints to development. The



ARTI and the Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, and the Department of Minor Export Crops worked in close association at the ARTI Beminiwatte Field Laboratory. A number of specialists - Agronomists, Soil Scientists, Agricultural Economists, Sociologists, Marketing and Irrigation specialists-formed the professional working group in the field. This approach to agricultural development involved the collection of background data to construct a comprehensive socio-economic profile of Beminiwatte, identifying local problems and developing action programmes to solve these problems.

The ARTI Field Laboratory in Beminiwatte thus served a long felt-need for conducting intensive and in-depth studies at village level to supplement macro studies done by the Institute, and to carry out programmes of action for agricultural and rural development on a pilot project basis. Some of the important action programmes carried out in Beminiwatte were the Home garden Project, the Group production Project and the Highland development Project. The ARTI's role in these programmes was that of an innovator and catalyst, introducing action programmes and guiding both the field officers of various departments and the farmers in these endeavours. In 1978, the ARTI withdrew as the catalyst from the Field Laboratory leaving the various departments to carry out their own development projects in the area.

THE GALGAMUWA PILOT PROJECT

The project area is coterminous with the Galgamuwa Agrarian Services

Committee (ASC) area. It consists of 10,655 acres of paddy and 13,078 acres of highland. Altogether there are close to 6000 farm households in the project area.

In July 1980, a project entitled "Management Training for Leaders of Small Farmer Organisations" was launched in the Galgamuwa Agricultural Services Centre (ASC) area (Kurunegala District) by the ARTI with the help of the FAO. This project aimed at training farmer leaders in organizing their communities for better management of local resources and in solving problems through group action. Because of limitations of finance and personnel the project was initially a short term project of nine months duration. However, when the pilot project was completed the ARTI decided to continue its training activities in the Galgamuwa ASC area as it became apparent that the organisation of farmers into small farmer organisations and the training of their leaders would enhance the opportunities for local farmers to improve their agricultural productivity and ultimately, their socio-economic conditions. Initial experimentation in Galgamuwa has provided support for a continuing experimentation with farmer organizations with provision for replicability elsewhere.

In their initial involvement in the farmer training programmes the ARTI researchers-cum-trainers found various field officers such as the Divisional Officer of the Agrarian Services Department, the Agricultural Instructor of the Department of Agriculture, the Tea Development Officer, the Coconut Development Officer and the Electoral managers of the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA) under one roof at the Agrarian

Services Centre, established by the Agrarian Services Act of 1979. Each ASC is manned by a Committee called the Agrarian Services Committee (ASC), composed of eight officers and six appointed farmer leaders. The main function of the ASC is to carry out agricultural development programmes as an integrated package, informing, educating and servicing the farmers of the division. But although various officials, together with farmer leaders, formed a body corporate to deal with the division's agricultural development, there were no organised bodies to represent it at the village level. Because of this weak interaction between villagers and the ASC, farmers often continued to act individually and in isolation. Thus, they could not receive the benefits coming from the ASC as expected by the Act. The ARTI felt that the organisation of small farmer associations at the village level was necessary to bridge the gap between farmers and the ASC and also to encourage collective action in production and rural development.

There are several advantages in organising farmers into small groups at the village or yava level. They are:-

- (a) If cultivation activities are planned on a group basis, farmers can obtain higher yields than what they could as individuals who operate their holdings separately. As a group farmers can obtain inputs in time from the ASC and the Co-operative Stores.
- (b) Farmers can enhance their 'bargaining power' vis-a-vis government officials through group activity. As a group they can press higher organisations and influentials to attend to

their problems and to provide necessary services in time.

- (c) Under the Agrarian Services Act of 1979, over 12,000 Vidanes (farmer leaders) were elected throughout the island by the farmers. Vidanes are assistants to the Cultivation Officers (a cultivation officer works in collaboration with 5-6 farmer leaders in coordinating agricultural development at village level). Six such Vidanes sit in each ASC as committee members. They can act as the link between the ASC and farmers. It is easy for the ASC to deal with farmer leaders if the farmers they represent are organised into groups.

SMALL FARMER ASSOCIATION

The ARTI explained the above advantages of organising farmers into small farmer association to 60 Vidanes in 1960, who were elected by the farmers as their representatives. The farmer representatives were encouraged by the ARTI to organise their own groups and soon 44 of such groups were established which became known as "Small Farmer Association".

The main objective of the introduction of Small Farmer Associations in the Galgamuwa Agrarian Services Centre area was to build up a 'strong receiving mechanism' at the village level for various supporting services and facilities provided by government sponsored 'delivery mechanisms'. These services include agricultural extension advice, supply of material inputs (seed/planting material, fertilisers and agro-chemicals) provision of seasonal agricultural credit, and distribution of irrigation water. These associations, during their initial stage took the form of small

groups of farmers, informal in character, and operating in a spirit of co-operation. The model adopted in establishing the Associations, though influenced by the Commilla approach in Bangladesh, was significantly modified to suit local conditions, through a blending of experiences of the local expertise of the ARTI and the Agrarian Services Department.

From the outset the Galgamuwa Project attempted to work through the existing institutions and delivery systems, by introducing new ideas and by offering advice whenever necessary. The ASC was made use of as the Coordinating Committee for this project. Farmer representatives in their respective villages or paddy tracts were recognised as leaders around whom the farmers could be organised.

TRAINING OF FARMER REPRESENTATIVES

Fortnight training-cum-discussion sessions were conducted for the benefit of farmer leaders and cultivation officers. These sessions were different from a teacher-pupil type of training. Each training session had a special theme considered crucial for agricultural development. The special themes identified were Irrigation and Water Management, roles, functions and duties of farmer-leaders, Agricultural Credit, Agricultural Extension, and supply of seeds, fertilizer and agro-chemicals, and crop insurance.

In the training sessions officers from divisional, district and national level were employed as Trainers. For example, when agricultural credit and crop insurance were discussed, officials from national and

district levels were invited to participate in the discussions in addition to the local level field officers. Thus, it was possible to provide 'on the spot solutions' to the problems raised by farmer-leaders, and these solutions were often implemented. This procedure helped in correcting some misconceptions held by both farmers and officials, relating to certain activities of each other. Furthermore, farmer leaders often convinced themselves that their ideas were seriously taken by officials. Thus, they developed a sense of recognition in themselves. On the other hand, they could convince their fellow farmers of their capability of supporting a reasonable cause affecting the farming community at large and thereby commanded the respect of their fellow farmers. The active farmer-leaders were amply rewarded for their services by fellow-farmers by paying them a stipulated share of the produce in kind (i.e. 1/2 a bushels per paddy/acre).

Another important aspect in this project relates to communication. It was recommended by project personnel to hold fortnightly group meetings of their respective associations. At these meetings, the members were expected to discuss problems and to arrive at solutions wherever possible, particularly when such problems were caused by personal rivalries, jealousies and so on. Farmer leaders were encouraged to invite village-level officers for these meetings so that solutions to any technical or bureaucratic problem could be discussed at the meeting itself. If there were any questions which needed attention of higher level officers, farmer leaders present them at the fortnightly training sessions held at the Agrarian Services Centre. Thus, an effective communications flow was

established from farm level to Agrarian Services Committee level. Similarly the decisions arrived at the Agrarian Services Committee was passed down to the farmers through farmer leaders.

ACTIVITIES OF FARMER ASSOCIATIONS:

The activities of the Farmer Association were manifold. Being a dry-zone area, the main emphasis was laid on the efficient use of water. In order to achieve this objective, several measures were introduced. First, each group was asked to prepare a group production plan. In this plan, extents of planned cultivation, the variety and age of the seed paddy, inputs available with each member and inputs needed from outside were elaborated. This plan provided a reasonable estimate of input requirements by each association. Therefore, if the associations made available these data well in time to the supplying institutions, each association could procure the required supplies for timely distribution among farmers. In addition, the farmers were persuaded to adhere to a common crop calendar so that water could be used efficiently. Wherever possible, the practice of dry-sowing with the onset of seasonal monsoons was also promoted. Sense of group responsibility and good credit discipline were infused into the minds of the farmers through a group credit scheme. The entire group was made responsible for recommending loan applications of the members in the group, and the responsibility of recovery of the loans was also made a group responsibility. By this procedure, it was possible to make use of the intimate knowledge of the members in a group in respect of their fellow-farmers' credit worthiness. In this manner, the lending agency could disburse the loans to honest

farmers and thereafter recover the loans given in full.

To benefit from economies of scale the groups were also persuaded to save on transport costs, etc., by purchasing and transporting the inputs required by the members collectively. Furthermore they were motivated to exert group pressure on oppressive forces and lethargic bureaucratic systems when necessary. One particular example was marketing. After a successful harvest, the paddy prices at village boutiques came down sharply and were much below the government guaranteed price. The association postponed their sales and made request to the Paddy Marketing Board to operate mobile purchasing units. The PMB responded quickly and prices again rose to normal levels.

Finally, the groups were encouraged to save. They were told that they remain poor as long as they did not have money. Hence they were advised to open a group savings account in the bank. At every association meeting, the members were to contribute a small sum (Rs.1/-, /50- cts) as agreed upon earlier. In addition, the desirability of saving a substantial sum at the harvest time was also emphasised. Many associations now have their group savings accounts with the bank.

The Galgamuwa project now enters into its fourth year. Out of the initial 44 farmer groups, the number of active groups was 28 by the beginning of 1983. There are various reasons for this drop. Amongst them, the most important was the failure of their crops for 3 consecutive seasons and hence there was very little agricultural activities to pursue. Many farmers have migrated out of the villages temporarily in

search of casual work. There are other problems apart from the natural hazards. Among other things these include the inefficiency of certain farmer leaders, unacceptability of the leadership due to their partiality, dishonesty, and political differences. The gradual withdrawal of the sponsoring agency from the project area, non-cooperation of village level government officials and their refusal to participate in village level meetings, and malpractices and abuses in supplying inputs and implementing subsidy programmes also contributed to this inefficiency.

However, in early 1983, we observed a marked revival in farmer organization activity in the area. After three failed cultivation seasons, the farmers managed to cultivate paddy in their fields. The government facilitated this by providing water to Usgala-Siyabalangamuwa reservoir--one of the large reservoirs in the ASC area--from the Mahaweli and by allowing farmers, who obtained credit from the Commercial Banks, five years to pay their previous debts. The ARTI played a vital role in helping farmers to organise themselves in voicing their demands and in negotiating with banks and the Crop Insurance Board.

The ARTI had agreed in principle with the Agrarian Services Department to help farmers in the Kurunegala District to establish their own Farmer Association and to train their office-bearers in development activities. As a first step of this exercise, the ARTI organized a series of training programmes for farmers in the Galgamuwa electorate. In June 1983, a two-day intensive training programme was held for farmer representatives, Cultivation Officers and the Divisional Officers

of the other four ASCS in the electorate. Officials from various government agencies, which have direct dealings with farmers, were invited as resource persons on various specialized subjects, such as agricultural credit, crop insurance, water management, minor export crops, highland cultivation and tennural and land laws¹. In the last three months (June to August) farmers themselves established 45 small farmer associations, in four ASC areas in the Galgamuwa electorate.

A summary of active small-farmer organisations in the Galgamuwa electorate is given below:

	No. of SFO	No. of Active
1. Galgamuwa ASC area	52	32
Morogollagama ASC area	12	12
Ahatuwewa " "	11	11
Nanneriya " "	15	15
Rajāngane " "	07	07
Total	<u>97</u>	<u>77</u>

¹ A compilation of papers on this training programme is now being prepared by the ARTI. It will be used in future training programmes as a source book. A manual of small-farmer training is also under preparation.

On-going Research and Training Programmes in the Galgamuwa Project Area

I Research Programmes

(a) Socio-economic Survey in the Galgamuwa ASC Area

In April 1983, the ARTI carried out a comprehensive socio-economic survey in the Galgamuwa ASC area. The main objective of the survey was to collect comprehensive data on socio-economic conditions of rural households in the area, for the following purposes.

- (i) to provide information for the effective organization of small-scale farmer groups
- (ii) as a source of information for the planning of agricultural development in the area
- (iii) as bench mark data to assess the project benefits in the future.

The preparation of the survey report is now underway.

(b) A critical Evaluation of the Role and Functions of the Agrarian Services Committees in Rural Development in Sri Lanka.

This is a national level research project. The four ASC areas selected for the study are Galgamuwa, Nuwera Eliya, Monaragala, Kegalle and Jaffna. Initially the study has been carried out in the Galgamuwa ASC area. Three categories of respondents are being interviewed for the survey. They are farmers, farmer representatives, Field officers, Cultivation officers, Agricultural investigators and the Divisional officers.

This study attempts to examine the general performance of the ASCs in relation to the objectives of the Agrarian Services Act and to suggest remedies, if any, to improve their performance. This general objective can be elaborated as follows.

- (i) to examine whether ASCs are carrying out their functions according to the objectives of the Agrarian Services Act;
 - (ii) to examine the nature of the relationship that is developing between the ASCs and officials working within the ASC's area of authority;
 - (iii) to assess the performance of Cultivation Officers and farmer-representatives in agricultural development;
 - (iv) to examine the degree of acceptance of Cultivation Officers and farmer-representatives by farmers as their leaders;
 - (v) to examine the nature of on-going training programmes for ASC office-bearers and Cultivation Officers; and
 - (vi) to suggest guidelines in the preparation of training programmes for ASC office-bearers, farmer-representatives and Cultivation Officers.
- (c) Preparation of an Inventory of All Rural Organizations in the Galgamuwa ASC Area.

Fieldwork phase of the project is completed. The objective of this exercise is to obtain a comprehensive undertaking of all the participatory networks which exist in the area for people to take part in various group activities. Special emphasis is placed on Women's Organizations in the area.

II Training Programmes

- (a) The ARTI has agreed in principle with the Agrarian Services Department to help farmers in the Kurunegala District to establish their own small-farmer organizations and to train office bearers of such organizations in development activities.
- (b) A comprehensive inservice training programme was held in June 1983 for farmer representatives and field officers in the Galgamuwa electorate.
- (c) A FAO project in small-farmer organizations has been approved by the Sri Lankan government. Initially, it will start as a pilot project in the Kurunegala district in the latter part of this year. From 1984 the project will be expanded to include one ASC from each district of Sri Lanka. A Small Farmer Manual with illustrations has been prepared and will be distributed through the Agricultural Services Centres.

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF MATTERS DISCUSSED IN SMALL FARMER ASSOCIATIONS

A summary of discussions which took place in several Small-Farmer Associations is given below. These summaries were extracted randomly from reports kept by the secretaries of the Associations. They indicate, in general, the recurrent problems, anxieties, and demands of the farmers. Also the minutes expound the official responses to these problems and demands.

I. Usgala Siyambalangamuwa Tract III Association

(Registered No. (K/G/FA/1/18 A/3)

This association was established on 3rd September 1980.

Summaries of the report of the 4th meeting held on 16-09-1981.

(a) ARTI's Contribution

Research & Training Officer of the ARTI, who is in-charge of the pilot project explained the importance of farmers participation in rural development. He emphasised the fact that when farmers are organised into small groups, they could bargain efficiently with state agencies to obtain various benefits, i.e. fertilizer, credit and transport facilities. He appreciated the progress of the Association especially in organising shramadanas for agricultural activities.

(b) Suggestions from the Farmer Members

Irrigation difficulties hampered efficient agricultural work in the division. Several farmer-members appealed to bring these difficulties to the notice of the government in order to obtain relief soon. The secretary pointed out how the Association has

managed to organise shramadanas to clean several irrigation channels. If not for this timely act, probably only 1/3 of farmers of Tract III would have received water to cultivate their paddy fields. But still the levelling of the pipeline is left to be done and since it is a technical job, the Secretary promised to bring this to the notice of the Irrigation Department. The Cultivation Officer pointed out that water management should be under the control of the Cultivation Officers in order to stop the wastage of irrigation water in different tracts.

(c) Guaranteed Price Scheme

The President suggested that a new scheme be introduced to buy other field crops from farmers in order to give them a fair price for their produce. He said that so far he had managed to collect Rs.302.75 to open a Bank Account on behalf of the Association. Once the account is opened, the Association will be in a position to buy the produce and to sell it to the Government Marketing Department.

(d) Grazing land

The President informed the Association that the Land Reform Commission was informed of the need to have a common grazing ground for the tract. He felt that the LRC would soon allocate a piece of land in the tract for this purpose.

Summary of the Report of the Association's meeting held on 26-08-1982.

SUGGESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

(a) Irrigation Water

The Secretary explained the progress in obtaining water from the Mahaweli to the Usgala-Siyambalangamuwa reservoir. He stated the matter was taken up with the Hon. Member of Parliament of the area and the Mahaweli Development Authority has agreed to provide water to the reservoir in next maha season.

(b) Agricultural Credit

A member pointed out that farmers were to insure their crops as a prerequisite for obtaining cultivation loans from the banks. But when crops fail the compensation paid by the Insurance Corporation was insufficient and the procedure to be followed to obtain damages was unsatisfactory. Therefore he suggested that crop insurance should be made optional. The investigator of ARTI explained that unless the Banks change their policies, the Farmer Association cannot insist on such changes at the village level. What ultimately is of consequence to farmers is to show the drawbacks in the services to the officers quickly and forcefully.

(c) Cultivation Plan

The Agricultural Instructor invited the farmer members to prepare lists of their seed paddy requirements in time in order to place requests for the same with the Agriculture Department.

(d) Irrigation

The secretary pointed out that through farmers' cooperation, the Association has managed to do all earthwork and levelling. The installation of pipes was to be done by technicians of the Irrigation Department. He said that the Irrigation Department had contacted the AO of the area and concrete works would begin before the beginning of the Maha season.

v

PARAKUM EKSATH GOVI SAMAJAYA: ATHARAGOLLA SETTLEMENT - SMALL SCALE

FARMER ASSOCIATION. Established in January 1981.

Registration No. of the Association K/G/FA/5/12/38.

Summary of the report of the Association meeting held on 25-10-1981.

Attendance = 25 farmer members (65%) Research & Training Officer from ARTI and the AI of the division were also present.

Four new members were enrolled as farmer members of the Association. The research officer explained briefly the objectives of the association to them.

TOPICS DISCUSSED.

(a) Cultivation Loans

The Secretary of the Association invited the R&TO to explain the procedure for obtaining cultivation loans for the maha season from the Bank of Ceylon. He provided them with details and promised to collect their applications and deliver them to the bank on behalf of the Association.

(b) Buffaloes

The R&TO explained the buffalo project in the area. He said although many farmers wish to buy buffaloes, only few of them can manage to buy buffaloes as the number of buffaloes available for sale is limited. But if there is a good demand, gradually the government would increase the number of buffaloes available for sale. He distributed application forms among the farmers who wanted to buy buffaloes from the government.

(c) Extension

The AI demonstrated how to prepare paddy fields economically and how to plough the fields efficiently. He stressed the fact that artificial fertilisers now cost the farmer lots of money and therefore that should use organic manure whenever possible in their fields.

(d) Collection of membership dues

Rs.47/- were collected. The secretary said that there is a group account at the Bank of Ceylon and so far Rs.27.15 were deposited in it.

(e) Shramadana

The secretary suggested that a day's Shramadana be organized to renovate irrigation channels and anicuts in the area. This was accepted unanimously by the members.

MAHAGALKADAWELA SMALL SCALE FARMER ORGANISATION. Established on 7-8-1980.

Attendance = 48 farmer members. No. of members 68.

TOPICS DISCUSSED

(a) Cultivation loans

A member stressed the importance of obtaining cultivation loans in time in order to prepare land holdings for the Maha season. The Cultivation Officer informed the Association that necessary actions were being taken in order to ensure timely disbursement of loans among farmers.

(b) Maintenance of channels and anicuts

It was decided to prosecute the farmers who did not clean sections of channels and anicuts allocated to them at the kanna saba (season meeting). All the members took part in the general discussion on the Maha paddy cultivation and the cultivation schedule adopted by the farmers.

Summary Report of the Proceedings of the Association Held on 30-03-1982.

TOPICS DISCUSSED

(a) The Cultivation of other field crops in paddy lands; The Secretary informed the members that since the paddy crop was destroyed at the beginning of the last maha season, the farmers should now endeavour to cultivate other field crops in their lands at the beginning of this maha season in order to reduce the risk of total crop failure. This suggestion was rejected by the Association by majority vote.

(b) Evaluation of Association's Activities

A farmer-member questioned as to why the village tank was not renovated to provide irrigation facilities to the village paddy fields. The President explained that although he had written several letters to the authorities no action was taken by them to renovate the tank. Another member said according to 7/8/80 meeting minutes, one of the objectives of the Association was to renovate the village tank and the anicuts. But so far nothing has happened. Therefore, he said that it was useless to attend the meetings. The secretary pleaded with other members to attend the meetings continuously in order to carry on the Association's activities in the area.

"DIPTHI" FARMERS ASSOCIATION - Usgala-Siyambalangamuwa Tract II.

Cultivation Officer Unit - Registered NO. K/G/FA/4/18 A/15.
Established in September 1980.

Summaries of the report of the Association Meeting held on 29-10-1980.

No. of farmers attended = 34 (67%)

TOPICS DISCUSSED

(a) Agricultural Credit

How to obtain cultivation loans for the member farmers and for those who defaulted in the last season, was the main topic of discussion. The members decided to appoint a committee of five members to study the credit situation and to select creditworthy farmers. The applicants were told to submit their applications to the Committee for its recommendations. Each application was to be signed on a Rs.1/- stamp to promise that money obtained on loan would be paid soon after the harvest of the season is gathered. It is to be the responsibility of the Committee to see that member-farmers of the Association pay their loans on time. 7 out of 11 defaulters informed the secretary of their decision not to apply for loans and the other 4 were informed by the Committee that they were not qualified to obtain credit.

Summary of the Report of the Association's meeting held on 26-08-1982.

Attendance 27 farmer members. 3 officers from Agricultural Service Centre.

TOPICS DISCUSSED

(a) Cultivation loan

The President of the Association informed the farmer-members that for the coming maha season, every farmer who did not default in previous seasons could obtain cultivation loans from either the Bank of Ceylon or People's Bank. Those who are in debt to the banks can also obtain loans provided they send their applications through the Association with its recommendations. The ARTI investigator explained that it is essential that farmer members pay their membership dues in order to keep their membership. Farmers who are not members of the Association cannot obtain credit under the Galgamuwa Small Scale Farmer Association Project. He appealed to all farmer-members to pay

the membership dues and to submit the loan applications soon. The Cultivation Officer explained that a farmer identity card will be issued to every farmer member.

(b) Extension

The AI of the area requested the farmer members to use the opportunities available at the ASC to improve their agriculture. He felt the farmers of the area were lucky as several government agencies take unusual interest in their well-being. He invited them to obtain extension advices from KVSS and to take active part in the Farmer Association.

(c) Irrigation

A farmer-member raised the issue of the difficulty of obtaining irrigation water for his land holding. He stated that he informed the officers several times but nothing has happened. The ARTI investigator promised to take the matter up with relevant officers and asked the farmer to send a letter to him explaining the problems and if possible some suggestions on how to solve it.