'Toxin-Free Nation' Agriculture Policy: Rhetoric & Repercussions

Parakrama Waidyanatha

National Agriculture Policy

- Food security
- Farmer income
- Health
- Environment



A wholesome agro - culture. A healthy populace

A Toxin Free, Nation

Three Year Plan

'Toxin Free Nation' Agriculture Policy: Howlers & Repercussions!

A better title?

"Toxin Free Nation"

• "A wholesome agro - culture. A healthy populace

- "Both Sri Lankan experts and the World Health Organization (WHO) have found the cause of this illness to be the *mixing of* brackish waters with sub-standard fertilizers and agrochemicals.
- While agro-chemical companies have expressed dissenting opinion using certain scientists who had been bought over the Cabinet Sub-committee, Officials Committee and WHO Consultants have recommended the control of poisonous agrochemicals and fertilizers" (page 5)

"The Goal If It Is Sri Lanka Then There Will Be No Agro-Toxins

- "A compassionate Maithri Governance, a stable country
- "I have never seen such a brutal fraud as promising money to kidney patients while allowing the distribution of pesticides and fertilizers that contain arsenic and cadmium.."
- "In this program, it is planned to provide 30% of the agricultural effort of the country through indigenous seeds that have hitherto been infrequently used but which have highly nutritious and high medicinal value"
- "I will initiate measures to formulate a time frame for the gradual elimination of the use of chemical fertilizers and agro-chemicals".

"The Solution Toxin-Free Food For All

- Greed for greater yields have created the need in farmers to blindly espouse conventional agriculture
- A toxin-less agro-culture is a system geared to obtain the required "plant-food" from the air, land and the immediate environment
- The greater focus is not on improved varieties but rather, indigenous and traditional seeds. This is due to the fact that they are far more resilient to nature's waywardness than the newer seeds.
- Further, instead of using herbicides and weedicides, mechanical methods as well as scientific technics can be applied by the farmers. Green fertilizers, organic fertilizers, microbiological fertilizers etc. can be excellently used in lieu of chemical fertilizers"

"There are four reasons why a farmer engages in agrochemical-based reductionist farming:

- To obtain bigger yields and greater profits
- To obtain yields quickly and easily
- To reduce labor costs
- To feed his addiction to agrochemicals"

Toxin-free Fertilizer

"Therefore, during the non- planting season for paddy or during the Yala season when some fields are left fallow, it is important that legumes such as urid, mung, gingelly, millet, maize, chickpea, cowpea etc.are planted to replenish the nitrogen in the soil."

Who formulated this policy?

Agriculture Ministry & Department?

An Expert Team from SEMA & Presidential Secretariat

Launch of the 'vasa visa nethi ratak' project



President Sirisena at the launch of vasa visa nethi ratak project (a toxin free country)

More howlers from the 'experts'!

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"Hena gahapan ganan balapan" (folk- lore)

A technology for nitrogen fertilizer production!

By

Toxin – Free Agriculture Programme Consultant

Toxin-free Agriculture Policy in a Nutshell

- Return to the use of traditional varieties of rice (30% over 3 years: 2016-2019))
- Phase out chemical fertilizers and pesticides
- Return to organic agriculture
 - -organic matter use
 - -microbial technologies: N-fixing bacteria; P solubilising bacteria etc
 - -Catherine Badgley (2006)- legume cover N fixation can theoretically provide the global N demand (with mineral P&K)
 - -biological pest control; plant extracts (Cuban example)

Rice production, productivity, extent & population in Sri Lanka

Year/Rice Varieties	Population Millions	Production Million T	Productivity T/Ha	Extent Million Ha	Rice Imports as% of Requiremen t
1940 only TVs	6	0.63	0.6	0.39	60
1960- TVs &OIVs	11	1.10	2.1	0.51	40
1980- only NIVs	17	2.40	3.3	0.70	25
2000- only NIVs	20	3.40	4.2	0.72	20
2010- only NIVs	21	4.30	4.3	1.10	<1
2015 only NIVs	21	4.82	4.4	1.25	<1
Increase	3 5	18 5	7 7	3.2	

Attribute	Traditional varieties	New improved varieties
National Average Yield	Low (1 t/ha)	High (4.5t/ha)
Fertilizer Responsiveness	Low	High
Lodging	Very susceptible	Resistant
Major (Leaf)Diseases	Susceptible	Resistant
Pests	Susceptible	Relatively more resistant
Nutritive Value	Variable	Variable

Norman Borlaug -2000

'Had we used the technologies of the 1950s to produce the harvest of 2000 it would have taken an additional 2.75 billion acres to feed world'.

Norman Borlaug (2000) 'Revisiting the Green Revolution'. Anniversary Lecture: the Norweigian Nobel Institute

Land under organic farming

Country	Extent (million ha)	% Total farmlands
Africa	1.2	0.1
Asia	3.6	0.3
Europe	11.6	2.4
Latin America	6.8	1.1
North America	3.1	0.8
Oceania	17.3	4.1
Total	43.5	1.0
66% Grasslands	20% Arable land	8% Permanent crops
Source: World Organic	Agriculture 2016	

2015/16 Organic Rice Farming Extents (Ha)

District	Extent	% of total
Ampara	3,575	4.3
Hambantota	400	1.5
Puttalam	578	2.8
Badulla	370	1.4
Total	6,413	0.8
*Marketing the produce?	*Bg 360 (Keeri Samba)	Bw 276 b(Kuruluthuda)

Heavy Metal Contents in Organic Fertilizers(ppm)

Heavy metal	Compost	Cowdung	Poultry dung
Cadmium	2.42	0.46 *U.K 2.5 Switzerland 2.0	0.14
Arsenic	0.21	-	-
Lead	29.6	1.39	0.43
Source : DOA * Cd Published data ** TSP MAL 3ppm			

Ban Chemical Fertilizers?

"It is estimated that 40% of today's 6 billion people are alive, thanks to the Haber-Bosch process of synthesizing ammonia"

(Vaclav Smil, Distinguished Professor, University of Manitoba).

Borlaug (2000) 'Green Revolution Revisited' -30th Anniversary of the Green Revolution

Alternative Fertilizers?

- "Local scientists have taken steps to produce robust non-toxic fertilizer.
- They can be sold at competitive prices
- The government will support their manufacture"

But is there evidence that they work?

'Biofilm biofertilizer'





BIOFERTILIZER & CROP YIELDS (Kg/ha)

Crop	50% Chemical fert + BFBF	100% Chemical fert*
Tea	4300 ± 606	4100 ± 678
Rice	4420 ± 715	3580 ± 1295
Maize	2681 ± 322	2502 ± 338
Radish	1192 ± 251	992 ± 188
Cabbage	1302 ± 342	980 ± 249
Bitter gourd	1547 ± 445	1563 ± 440
Aubergine	748 ± 175	678 ± 260
Okra	3107 ± 1719	1739 ± 710
Chilli	3478 ± 1754	2350 ± 919
Hungarian wax pepp	er 238 ± 50	152 ± 39 3
Tomato	335 ± 86	397 ± 131
Pole bean	2762 ± 886	2396 ± 753

^{*} Recommended by the relevant institutions.

Commonwealth Agric. Bureau J

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* දුවසේ සවස් කාලයේදී (තද හිරු රශ්මිය හැස ගිය පසු) භාවිතා කිරීම නිර්දේශ කරයි.

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Microbial Fertilizers

Multinationals are into microbial fertilizer research!

Scientific American Jan 2016 Microbes Added to Seeds Could Boost Crop Production

Researchers are testing more than 2,000 different microbial seed coatings on half a million test plots in the U.S.

By Marla Broadfoot on January 6, 2016

The Glyphosate Ban

- No scientific evidence for the ban!
- Hypothesis: glyphosate & hardwater forming metal complexes including As may cause CKDu
- WHO –SL Report (2013) did not implicate glyphosate in CKDu (Table)
- WHO-PTF Consultation (2016)- no evidence to implicate glyphosate in CKDu
- Temporal and spatial mismatch between CKDu occurrence & glyphosate
- Sri Lanka is the only country that has banned glyphosate

Glyphosate contd.

- IARC Report (2015)- probably carcinogenic (hazard/risk)
- WHO-FAO JMPR(2016)- no evidence of carcinogenicity or genotoxicity
- A large number of international scientific agencies & individuals objected to banning
- Case of the adjuant taloamine

% Subjects with Pesticide Residues in urine above Reference Limits

Pesticide	CKDU Patients	Control Subjects*
Chlorpyrophos	7.0	17.0
Carbaryl	8.8	22.4
2, Naphthol	10.5	31.0
Glyphosate	3.5	7.0
2, 4-D	3.5	7.0
Source: WHO Study Raw data via NSF	(2013)	*from Hambantota

Glyphosate residue levels in the environment and food (ppb) in Sri Lanka

Drinking water	0.7 -3.5	Jayasumana et all (2015)
-do-	0.02-0.1	Registrar of Pesticides (2016)
Soil	0.02 - 0.36	-do-
Corn	0.15 - 0.21	-do-
Capsicum	nor detected	-do-
Cabbage	- do-	- do-
MAL in drinking water	200 EU; 600 EPA, U.S	

Cyperus weed competing with maize



Industrial Pollution vs Agrochemical Pollution



Industrial Pollution!

Annual Release from Coal Power Plants

USA (1.05 b MT Coal/yr SRI LANKA (1.9 m MT Coal/yr)

109 t/yr Mercury 3.0 t/yr Arsenic 7884 2.0 Cadmium 750 0.13 Chromium 8810 2.9 Nickel 9939 ? Selenium 2587 Lead 5.7 CO2 1.9 **b t/yr**

SO2

Natural Toxins in Food

Toxins in food not limited to man made chemicals

- Afflotoxins (Aspergillus flavus) –grains, nuts legumes
- Ergot ('ergotism') Claviceps purpurea- rye and other grains
- Goitrogens- suppresses thyroid gland functioning; interferes with iodine uptake
- Hydrazines- carcinogen in mushrooms
- Lectines toxic protein in food
- Phytates- many foods soya, whole wheat reduces absorption of minerals

Natural Toxins in Food Contd.

- Psoralines natural toxin in celery, parsley & parsnips
- Solanines- a toxic alkaloid in potato, eggplant, tomato & peppers
- Trypsin inhibitors- toxins in food that reduce trypsin availability
- Opoid peptides- opiate produced during digestion- wheat, dairy products

Reduction in Hazardous Pesticide Use

WHO Ha	WHO Hazard Class of Pesticides			Year 2002	Year 2016	% Change	
整		VERY A E		ı	9.3 (40)	0.2 (1)	98↓
22		HARMFUL 5		II	43.5 (187)	28.7 (133)	29↓
鰮		CAUTION		Ш	20.5 (88)	36.2 (168)	91个
	鹽		3	IV	26.7 (115)	34.9 (162)	41个

^{*}within brackets are the number of products.

Pesticide Misuse!

 'All substances are poisons. There is nothing which is not a poison. The right dosage differentiates a poison and remedy'

 Bombastus Paracelsus (1493-1541), the Founder of the Science of Pharmacology; Professor of Medicine, University of Basel

Mass Media Misleading the People!

Daily Aews



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ON MANY FRONTS...

After glyphosate was banned as there was reasonable evidence to believe that the CKD epidemic in the North Central Province was due to excessive use of this brand of chemical fertilizer, it should have followed that there should be no argument on the issue -- and that there would be more maturity on the subject of dumping.

Glyphosate usage, or at least excessive reliance on this fertilizer was as a result of sustained dumping, and this fact cannot be countered by the contention that farmers use the same brand of fertilizer in the US. If they do they would be using the poison with all the precautions taken, whereas in the developing world, dumping causes indiscriminate use of certain brands of chemically based soil nutrients, so called.

These days however, there is the more recent anxiety about golden rice, and the move to introduce this genetically modified variety in a effort it appears, to denude countries such as ours and the Philippines of our rich gene pools, which assure us a constant supply of rice gene types suited for various circumstances, flood resistant rice being one example.

Golden rice is touted with the promise that it contains vitamin A which would ameliorate any conditions of deficiency of this nutrient in developing world populations.

To obliterate entire gene pools for the promise of one nutrient in rice, is tantamount to giving up one malady in exchange of a thousand more.

It is hoped that the authorities concerned display maximum awareness about scams such as 'golden rice' and reject these before damage is done in the way glyphosate did before it was identified as the chief culprit behind the kidney disease epidemic. There were the bad old days when any prattle was acceptable, and was embraced as the last word when it came to decision making on policy related matters.

Now, there is a far more aware and alert bureaucracy at the helm of affairs in this country, and it bears mention that these public servants are informed by others who do not accept the half baked ideas of a servile set of lackeys of foreign interlopers, as the absolute inalienable truth.

Minds are subtly poisoned with regard to issues both big and small and issues of great import such as political issues pertaining to separatism, as equally as in matters of great social concern such as the CKD problem...

In a recent opinion piece, a person who can only be referred to as a regular race baiter and hater offers that the referendum in Scotland should not lead to separation, whereas in Sri Lanka the case for separatism is so strong that there should be no argument on the issue.

This kind of casuistry used to be considered as gospel in a certain day and age when there were half hearted efforts to rid this

Daily News Editorial!

ON MANY FRONTS...

 "Glyphosate usage, or at least excessive reliance on this fertilizer was a result of sustained dumping"....

දෙමත් ගොව ජනතාව සවිබල ගැන්ව කියාත්මක 'ගොවි සමූපකාර කුමයක්' මෙවර 2017 අයවැය මඟින් නඳුන්වා දී තිබිම මඟිනි. තමුත් මේ කවර කුමවේදයන් හඳුන්වා දුන්න ද ඒවා පුශස්ත ලෙස ම කියාවට නැංවුව ද. ශී් ලංකාවේ සමස්ත කෘෂිකර්මාත්තය ම ගිල දමමින් රට ම රෝගීන් කරනු මහා වසසනය හෙවත් ්රසායනික ජොහොර භාවිතයෙන්' අපට මිදෙන්නට නොහැකි වුවහොත් මේ සියලු පුයත්නයත් ගඟට තැපු ඉති මෙන් විනාශ මුඛයටම ඇදී යන බව නොකියා ම බැරිය. රට ම ලෙඩ කරන වස විස පිරවූ රසායනික පොහොර මල්ලක් වෙනුවට කාබනික පොහොර හා වෙනත් ආදේශක සඳහා ගොවී ජනතාව හුරු කරවීමේ අරමුණිත් මුදුල් ආධාර ලබාදීමේ වැඩපිළිමුවුළ නමා රජය මිර

 ශි් ලංකාවේ සමස්ත කෘෂිකර්මාන්තය ම ගිල දමමින් රට ම රෝගීන් කරන මතා වෘසනය හෙවත් රසායනික පොහොර භාවිතයෙන් අපට මිදෙන්නට නොහැකි වුවහොත් මේ සියලු පුයත්නයන් ගඟට කැපූ ඉනි මෙන් විනාශ මුබයටම ඇදී යන බව නොකියා ම බැරිය

 ඒ සමස්ත රටක විනාශය දැක දැක, අනාගත පරපුරේ අකල් මරණය දැක දැක, ඔබට මේ මොහොතේ සැනසීමෙන් හුස්මක් ඉහළට ගත හැකිද? යන්නය.

Conclusion

- No food or agricultural system is toxin-free. The need is to minimize toxins through appropriate interventions.
- Discontinuance of agrochemicals without proven alternatives & 30% replacement of improved rice varieties with low – yielding traditional varieties could have serious repercussions on rice production and food security.
- The government should consult institutes/experts in decision making in technical matters & appoint the right people for the tasks
- Mainstream scientists are overlooked
- There is the need for the media for factual reporting on technical matters and not distorting facts for sensation: "wasa visa krushakarmaya"!

".The need to bring commonsense into the debate on agricultural science and technology (Norman Borlaug, 2000)

"There is a deadlock between agriculturists and environmentalists over what constitutes sustainable agriculture" (Robert Paalberg)

Thank you



President Sirisena at the launch of vasa visa nethi ratak project (a toxin free country)



A wholesome agro - culture. A healthy populace

A Toxin Free, Nation

Three Year Plan

"Destruction of farmlands has taken place due to agro-toxins Soil nutrition is destroyed Microorganisms and other fauna helpful to farming have been killed off Where is the evidence?

Nutritional quality

Presence of protein, fat , fiber, and minerals (Fe and Zn) in rice grain is important. Comparison between some trad. and Impro. varieties

important. Companion botwoon come trad. and impro. Variotice						
Variety	Protein%	Fat%	Fiber%	Minerals	(mg/100g)	
(0	PR; 55-80g)			Fe (DR; 8-18mg)	Zn (DR; 8-14mg)	
Kaluheenati	9.1	2.7	2.7	2.7	3.5	
Madathawalu	7.9	3.0	1.0	2.8	3.4	
Rath Suwandel	8.8	2.6	1.1	2.4	3.1	
Suduru Samba	7.4	4.1	8.0	2.7	2.9	
Pachchaperuma	al 9.9	2.8	0.8	3.0	3.2	
Suduheenati	8.8	2.6	1.1	2.8	3.0	
Bw 2726b	9.0	3.1	1.1	2.0	3.1	
Bw 364	10.0	2.9	1.0	2.0	2.7	
Bg 352	7.5	4.3	1.6	1.9	2.9	
At 307	8.4	2.4	1.1	2.4	3.4	
Bg 360	7.4	2.5	1.9	1.8	2.5	
Red Basmathi	7.8	2.1	3.4	0.9	1.9	
Red Basma. Imp	9.3	2.0	3.9	1.0	2.4	

The Same Nutrition for The Same Price

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- The prices of organics should be similar or comparable to chemical based produce.
- According to the plan, 30% of rice produced in Sri Lanka would be indigenous varieties at the end of the three year plan.
- Further, organic, natural, biological fertilizers and pest repellants will replace the agrochemicals used to cultivate these improved varieties and it is anticipated that these toxins will be completely
- eradicated from Sri Lankan soil by the third year of the program.
- Toxin-Free Pest Control
- State patronage will be provided for the production of pest control liquids or powder utilizing indigenous herbal extracts. I will also initiate measures to formulate a time frame for the gradual elimination of the use of chemical fertilizers and agro-chemicals

Nutritive Value: TVs vs NIVs

Variety	Av. Yield (Kg/ha)	% Protein	% Anti-glycemic Index
Traditional			
Sudu Heenati	1.7	8.8	91
Kalu Heenati	2.5	9.1	89
Pachchaperumal	2.7	9.0	82
New Improved (Red)			
BW 364	5	10.0	84
At 353 New Improved (White)	5	8.7	82
BG 352	6	7.5	40
AL 306	F	0 0	2
	5	8.8	?