

Title An investigation of Sarawak pepper distribution channels: Current status, problems and potential

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Abstract

Pepper (*Piper nigrum*) is a popular spice and it is one of the most important spices traded internationally. Pepper gives a significant contribution to the agriculture sector and the economy of Malaysia. The State of Sarawak is the main pepper producing region in Malaysia accounting for 98% of the country's annual production in 2011. Majority of the pepper cultivation are monopolized by smallholder farmers and these farmers generally sold their pepper to buyers using different distribution channels. Malaysian Pepper Board (MPB), Federal Agriculture Marketing Authority (FAMA) and Farmers' Organization Authority (LPP) are those government agencies who involved in the distribution channels of pepper while private sector channels are consisted of profit oriented buyers. Selection towards a better distribution channel is important because it will improve the marketing activities of pepper as well as to increase income of the farmers. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the current status, problem and potential of Sarawak pepper distribution channels among smallholder farmers. A quantitative survey was conducted using structured questionnaires which were randomly distributed in the areas in Kuching such as Bau, Serian and Simunjan. Data were analyzed using statistical analyses such as descriptive analysis, means ranking analysis and t-test. Results showed that farmers who had selected government agencies as an intermediary are potential to have a better income compared to private agents.