



# Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS) Section A Newsletter

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## Farm and zoo animals' plight amidst economic crisis in Sri Lanka

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Skyrocketing animal feed prices, shortage of fertilizer to grow pasture and fodder and reduced government spending capacity have plunged the Sri Lankan farm and zoo animals into many hardships.

Maize and soya bean are the main ingredients of cattle and poultry feed. Until recently, maize was cultivated and produced locally and government support was also provided for maize cultivation. Due to forex shortage and fertilizer ban, fertilizer required for maize cultivation is scarce in the market. The local fertilizer price also has gone up due to increased exchange rates and high inflation.

However, as an alternative to this shortage, importation of maize is also not an answer as the required foreign exchange is also short. This vicious cycle of forex shortage, exchange rate increase and high inflation has created a massive shortage of animal feed in the market.

Annual animal feed production in Sri Lanka was 1.4M MT1 in 2021 and local maize production was around 472,000 MT2 in the same year. Maize importation for animal feed was around 4838 MT2 in 2021. Annual soya bean production in 2021 was 3704 MT2 and importation was around 227,871 MT2 in 2021.

This situation has changed quite drastically in 2022. Due to fertilizer ban, maize cultivation has reduced and due to forex shortage importation was curtailed. The same thing has happened to soya beans too.

### This Issue

1. Farm and zoo animals' plight amidst economic crisis in Sri Lanka
2. List of activities

Subsequently, local animal feed production has reduced drastically and the feed price also has increased which have in turn affected both the poultry and dairy industries badly.

According to the chairman of the All-island Poultry Association the production of broiler meat decreased by 30% to 12,000 MT a month from 18,000 MT from March to June and the per kilo price has also risen sharply. Daily egg production, which used to be between 700,000 and 800,000, has now dropped to about 400,000.

They also stated that for the poultry industry they need around 600,000 MT of maize. The country's production is only around 400,000 MT and the rest must be imported. Of the 400,000 MT, around 80 percent comes from the Maha season.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the fertilizer ban, Sri Lanka imported around 75,000 MT in 2021. Meanwhile, maize suppliers curtailed supply to the market in an attempt to raise prices. One kilogram of maize was around 70 rupees until March 2022. However, due to this shortage, it has now gone up to 275 rupees.<sup>3</sup>

The Dehiwala Zoo in Colombo has also been hit by the runaway inflation and sky rocketing animal feed prices, leaving it scrambling for options to keep its animals fed. Its charismatic species — elephants and big cats — account for the lion's share of the food cost. The zoos are considering options to reduce the food cost by

- offering a foster parent program where members of the public can “adopt” these animals by contributing to their upkeep,
- considering to release some of its deer such as the spotted deer (*Axis axis*), sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) and Sri Lankan spotted chevrotain (*Moschiola meminna*)<sup>4</sup>
- replacing increasingly expensive imported fruit with local produce, and to grow more food on site<sup>4,5,6</sup> which is a more immediate plan.

The zoo is home to 56 species of mammals, with 264 individuals accounting for the literal lion's share of the cost of food. Each elephant at the zoo requires about 150 kilograms (330 pounds) of leafy greens a day, while adult big cats like Bengal tigers and lions need about 7 kg (15 lbs) of meat per day. The zoo calculates that the daily cost comes out to nearly 54,000 rupees (\$150) for the elephants, 31,000 rupees (\$86) for the tigers, and about 28,000 (\$79) for the lions.<sup>6</sup>

#### References:

1. VRA Division/ DAPH
2. Dept. of Census and Statistics, AQ Station-DAPH, Sri Lanka Customs

3.<https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-chicken-egg-prices-soar-due-to-demand-spike-animal-feed-shortage-98486/>

4.<https://www.eco-business.com/news/zoo-animals-suffer-as-food-prices-surge-amid-sri-lankas-economic-crash/>

5 <https://news.mongabay.com/2022/06/zoo-animals-not-immune-to-sri-lankas-economic-rout-as-food-prices-surge/>

6.<https://www.businessinsider.in/international/news/sri-lankan-zoo-animals-face-the-heat-of-financial-crisis-as-authorities-run-out-of-money-to-feed-them/articleshow/92051171.cms>

**List of activities of SLAAS Section A from August to December 2022****August**

8 <sup>th</sup> August	An online journal club for postgraduate research students of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, was carried out, from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm with Dr. Tharanga Thoradeniya as the resource person. There were 40 participants. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr. Ysaswi Walpita; <a href="mailto:yasaswi@commed.cmb.ac.lk">yasaswi@commed.cmb.ac.lk</a>
10 <sup>th</sup> August	An online training programme was carried out on the “Importance of Health Promotion at the workplace to combat NCDs from 8 pm to 10 pm with Dr. Ysaswi Walpita as the resource person. There were 90 participants. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr. Ysaswi Walpita; <a href="mailto:yasaswi@commed.cmb.ac.lk">yasaswi@commed.cmb.ac.lk</a>
18 <sup>th</sup> August	A programme was carried from 9 am to 4 pm at the Ministry of Health with 40 participants, to share best practices in the Health Sector. Dr. Kithsiri Samarakoon was the resource person. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr. Thilina Wanigasekera; <a href="mailto:thilinaw71@gmail.com">thilinaw71@gmail.com</a>
25 <sup>th</sup> to 31 <sup>st</sup> August	A series of oral health screening and awareness programmes was carried out in selected 10 pre-schools in Moneragala district. Around 300 children were screened and oral health education was given. Dental surgeons and school dental therapists under the direction of RDS Moneragala, Dr. KM Sirisena conducted the activities. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr. Nilantha Ratnayake <a href="mailto:nilantha.ratnayake@yahoo.com">nilantha.ratnayake@yahoo.com</a>
26 <sup>th</sup> August	A programme was carried out in collaboration with the Colombo Medical Faculty Student Research Community on “Conducting an Effective Oral/Poster Presentation” from 4 pm to 5.30 pm online. The resource person was Dr Buddhini Denuwara. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr. Ysaswi Walpita; <a href="mailto:yasaswi@commed.cmb.ac.lk">yasaswi@commed.cmb.ac.lk</a>
31 <sup>st</sup> August	A TV programme was carried out on Siyatha TV from 8.30 am to 9.a.m. on “Ayurvedha remedies for minor issues in the first trimester of pregnancy” with Dr Kaumadi Karunagoda as the resource person. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr. Kaumadi Karunagoda; <a href="mailto:kaumadik@gmail.com">kaumadik@gmail.com</a>
<b>September</b>	
6 <sup>th</sup> September	A workshop was conducted on “Green Procurement Methodologies on the Health Sector” with Mr. Dinesh as the resource person on 9 am to 12 noon with 50 participants at the Health Ministry Auditorium. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr Thilina Wanigasekera; <a href="mailto:thilinaw71@gmail.com">thilinaw71@gmail.com</a>
8 <sup>th</sup> September	A career guidance programme was held for Ministry Officials from 10 am to 12 noon with Dr Thilina Wanigasekera as the resource person. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr Thilina Wanigasekera; <a href="mailto:thilinaw71@gmail.com">thilinaw71@gmail.com</a>
16 <sup>th</sup> to 22 <sup>nd</sup> September	A workshop on Research Methodology for BAMS & BUMS Level IV undergraduates was held from for BAMS and BUMS undergraduates of the Institute of Indigenous Medicine, Rajagiriya with Ass. Professor Swarna Hapuarachchi, Professor Kamal Perera, and Professor N Fahamiya as the resource persons. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr. Kaumadi Karunagoda; <a href="mailto:kaumadik@gmail.co">kaumadik@gmail.co</a>
23 <sup>rd</sup> September	A programme was conducted from 8.30 am to 12 noon in Negombo with Prof MC Weerasinghe and Dr Kaumadi Karunagoda and Mr Sunghe from Sumithuro Foundation as resource persons. It was carried out in collaboration with the Fisheries Ministry and SLAAS. There were 35 participants. Activity coordinator and contact details: Prof Manuj Weerasinghe; <a href="mailto:manuj@commed.cmb.ac.lk">manuj@commed.cmb.ac.lk</a>
26 <sup>th</sup> to 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Oral health screening programmes were carried out in 7 pre-schools in Kaluthara district. Around 200 children were screened and oral health education was given. School Dental Therapists under the guidance of RDS Kaluthara, Dr. BG Fernando conducted the activities. Activity coordinator and contact details: Dr. Nilantha Ratnayake; <a href="mailto:nilantha.ratnayake@yahoo.com">nilantha.ratnayake@yahoo.com</a>



**A workshop on “Green Procurement Methodologies on the Health Sector”**



**A Television programme on “Ayurvedha remedies for minor issues in the first trimester of pregnancy.”**

 **Siyatha TV** ✓  
6 July at 11:34 · 🌐

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**ආදරණීය ජීවිතය**



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