

Comparison between Three and Four Rounds of Tea Harvesting per Month: The Case of Annfield Estate, Hatton

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Different tea estates practice different harvesting intervals ranging from seven to ten days. Harvesting operation have a high impact on the productivity of a tea land, the cost of production and the quality of harvested leaf. The objective of the present study was to compare three to four rounds of harvesting of tea per month. Two factor factorial was used as the experimental design. Those two factors were plucking frequency (7 and 10 days) and cultivars of tea (DYN, DT1, N2, and Old Seedling Tea). A schedule was made and data of leaf yield, leaf standard, and severity of plucking and total cost was calculated. Results showed that monthly leaf yield is higher under 10 day plucking interval than 7 days plucking interval in both October and November months. However, the gap tends to get narrower in November month. This can be attributed heavy rain occurred in November month and the fact that the estate has been practicing 9 day plucking interval. When consider leaf standard as fine plucking, it was significantly higher in October month with 7 day interval when compared to 10 day interval. But the differences were non-significant in November. However, when we consider fine and medium plucking together (*i.e.*, good leaf standard) mean differences in leaf standard was non-significant even in October. This could be attributed to heavy rains occurred during November where the yields were dropped significantly. The drop was high as 60% with some cultivars. When consider the monthly cost, 10 day harvesting cost was significantly higher than 7 day harvesting cost among all cultivars except OST during October. This study shows some insights about the impact of changing plucking intervals on the green leaf yield and cost of harvesting. A long-term study is required to understand the yield differences under different harvesting intervals.

Keywords: Number of plucking, Plucking interval, Plucking standard, Tea harvesting

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