

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

When the work was embarked upon the supply of poultry feeds in Trinidad was most precarious. Williams (1943) had suggested the use of local products and by-products in rations to enable farmers and others to maintain poultry and egg production without relying on imported supplies. This worker mentioned rice by-products, yeast, citrus pulp, coconut meal and several other substances as potential constituents of rations, and referred to authorities in the U.S.A. and elsewhere on the use of these materials. Few of the suggested substances had been tested in Trinidad, and as the mode of preparation and so the composition of the products, would vary from country to country, unreservedly to accept recommendations from abroad might have led to much disappointment.

The writer heard of several trials which had been made locally to test the available materials, but in no case could the experiment have been said to have given incontrovertible proof of the usefulness of the products tested. In most cases the experiment had consisted of the addition of the local product to another ration, either as a diluent added to a good ration to make the supply last longer, or as a supplement to an unsatisfactory diet. Seldom had any attempt been made to construct a new ration using the local food-stuff in a carefully considered amount to replace wholly, or in part, a feed not available in the Colony.

In the trials that had been carried out, there was seldom any scientific record of the results. Usually conclusions were drawn from observation only; the condition of the birds either improved or fell off, production increased or declined. In few cases were figures produced to support the contentions of those who had conducted the trials. Inevitably there was misunderstanding on the use of local materials. Some substances were condemned outright while others gained exaggerated reputations as supplements to poultry rations.

Clearly, there was a need for properly conducted experiments to determine exactly in what way and in what amounts the local products could be fed to the best advantage, and this was the object of the present study.

Two by-products, rice offals and rum vat yeast were chosen as likely ingredients of rations. In Trinidad both these substances were regarded as waste of little or no value. In other countries similar products had been used successfully, thus indicating the likelihood of success. Unfortunately, owing to the recall of the writer from Trinidad by the Colonial Office somewhat earlier than anticipated, it was not possible to proceed far with the rum vat yeast investigation. In particular, it was not possible to carry out any feeding trials. However, the information collected has been presented, as an introduction to the subject.

From the beginning it was not intended that the experiments should satisfy a war-time emergency only by suggesting an expensive temporary substitute; but that the results should be applicable in general. It was hoped that the conclusions might help poultry owners to reduce expenditure on imported foods, and might provide a market for by-products hitherto regarded as unsaleable.