

Part I

INTRODUCTION:

In 1942/43, under a Government policy for maximum home production of cereals and pulses in wartime, a depot was established at St. Joseph, Trinidad, to deal with surplus grain. This policy was continued after the war and, in addition, it was decided that feeding stuffs were to be produced mainly from local materials because of the expense of the imported product (1).

Maize is not an important crop in Trinidad but it is a major component of these home produced feeding stuffs and, as such, occupies the bulk of the storage space at the depot. It can be grown practically all the year round but most of it is harvested about mid-November, towards the end of the wet season. The normal production of the Colony is between 6,000 and 7,000 short tons (1 short ton = 2,000 lbs.), of which about 2,500 short tons per annum are purchased by the Marketing Board for storage at the depot. The average period of storage is not normally longer than six months.

A battery of 24 metal bins with a total capacity of about 1,100 short tons was installed in 1952 for storing maize. Each bin holds approximately 45 short tons (90,000 lbs.). The bins were constructed by cutting old welded steel petrol tanks in half and welding on a conical bottom with a narrow outlet. A manhole was cut in the centre of the domed top. Each manhole was covered with a hinged lid bearing a baffled ventilator, and each ventilator had a fine gauze disc secured over the inside to prevent the entry of pests. Each bin is filled through a chute, which was let into the side of the top dome, by one of two auger conveyors which run the length of the battery. The battery is aligned north and south, with

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the north, east and west sides exposed, the south side being protected by an adjacent building. There is no roof over the bins though the wooden access platform partially shelters most of them.

length of time and some was fresh from the producer. All maize was dried on arrival to a very approxi-