

Abstract

The Aranjuez market-gardeners carry their own produce to market and sell it mainly to the retail vendors. Details of this system are recorded, with respect to cleaning, grading and transporting the crop, and the organization of selling in the market. Reference is made to the variations in wholesale price which are experienced. Before February 1968 the Port of Spain market, where the gardeners sold most of their produce, was the Eastern Market. This had no area provided for wholesaling, and hence the gardeners were forced to sell on the pavements of the surrounding streets. In February 1968 the new Central Market was opened, with wholesale space provided. The effects of this move are described and discussed.

The Central Marketing Agency, a statutory body charged with improving the marketing of agricultural produce, has introduced a contract system, whereby gardeners are offered a fixed or negotiated price for quantities of produce before they plant the crop. The Agency is setting up buying stations in the rural areas to remove the need for gardeners to do their own wholesaling, and in time they may become the sole buyer at farmgate for vegetables. These developments are discussed and a number of the problems arising are pointed out.

The contract scheme has not yet been widely accepted in Aranjuez. Some of the advantages to the gardeners of the Agency's

plans are discussed. It is pointed out that these changes may represent a threat to the comparative advantage which the Aranjuez gardeners now have over other gardeners in the island. A further problem facing the gardeners is that the irrigation system on which their dry season production depends is greatly in need of repair. These two factors may affect the future income of the gardeners.