INTRODUCTION

In Trinidad and many other parts of the tropics imported feeding stuffs from temperate or sub-tropical areas are widely used for growing and fattening pigs. An important factor in the cost of pig production is that the freight charges on these imported proprietary compounds and ingredients make the cost of food extremely high to the producer. Home producers find it very difficult to compete with pork imported from other countries as the freight charges on pork carcases are considerably less than the freight charges on the meal that would be needed to produce an equivalent amount of meat.

Many tropical foodstuffs have been used by small producers in the past, there is still, however, a serious lack of knowledge about the feeding value of many of these foods. It is therefore desirable that more information should be collected with regard to such feeding stuffs as cassava, taro, cane molasses, pineapple bran, rice paddy and such fruits as papayas, bananas and avocados. A series of investigations has therefore been started by the College to evaluate locally grown feeds and by-products with a view to incorporating them into pig rations in order to lower feed costs.

The first trial was carried out on the Government Livestock Premises at O'meara, Trinidad. It was unfortunate that when the facilities for carrying out this trial were created by Government, that the only stock available were already somewhat over age for the investigation that it was proposed to carry out. In consequence an experiment had to be rapidly designed and started before it was possible to make a review of the relevant literature, and the whole trial must therefore be viewed in this light.

An abundant and readily available foodstuff suitable for feeding to pigs in Trinidad at the present time is bananas and they were therefore used in the first trial.

There are two types of bananas available for stock feed in Trinidad, those rejected at the wharves and those varieties unsuitable for export which are resistant to Panama disease and are grown as shade for young cocoa. It was the latter type of banana that was used in this investigation, e.g. Mysore bananas.