

A B S T R A C T

Aranjuez is the principal vegetable growing area in Trinidad and, in common with other areas in the island, production is characterised by high levels of labour inputs and low levels of investment in mechanisation. In recent years there has been a marked increase in agricultural wages in the area, and this has been reflected by increased production costs.

This study is an attempt to evaluate the scope for further mechanisation in the area by considering the technical and social problems of introducing machines and estimating the likely economic benefit of various proposed operations. Throughout the year, the policy has been to demonstrate as many machines as possible so that practical problems and the reactions of the gardening community could be more realistically assessed.

The results have shown that, despite the unsuitability of the area for the efficient operation of many machines, mechanisation can still offer substantial benefits even to the gardener with only a very small acreage of land. Particular items were mechanical ridging and transplanting, mechanical irrigation, power-operated knapsack sprayers and small horticultural tractors. Many of the gardeners in the area are becoming increasingly interested in mechanisation and an extension of such operations seems likely in the future.