

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Scope:

This review has been undertaken to examine the present state of the banana industry, and to determine its future possibilities as an export trade.

It incorporates a study of methods of production on peasant holdings and estates; of marketing of bananas and the part played by the Marketing Board, and an investigation of the services provided by the Department of Agriculture. The area surveyed is outlined in red on Maps I and II in the appendix.

Salient Facts.

From the accounts given in the following text, it appears that the banana industry is fairly well established. The banana export industry is increasing due mainly to the efforts of small producers. It was found that the Marketing Board was providing an efficient organisation for the marketing of export bananas, but that organisation of local marketing was very inefficient. The extension services of the Department of Agriculture appears to be carrying out good work in connection with increasing production in the banana industry. Further extension work is desirable particularly in Tobago, but is handicapped by lack of good communications there, a factor that limits banana production in that Island. In Trinidad it appears that the limiting factor to extending the acreage of banana production is one of suitable soil type.

The future prospects of the industry are fairly good. With a guaranteed market for export fruit for a further period of 13 years the immediate future of the export industry is promising. However, the prosperity of the industry after the Agreement with the Union International Company expires, appears to be linked closely with the future of the Cocoa Industry. A flourishing cocoa industry should encourage cocoa growers to

∟ replant ...

replant old cocoa land which, with the use of bananas as a shade crop for clonal cocoa, would ensure that banana production was maintained at a high level.

It is suggested that an organization such as a Banana Growers Association should be set up to encourage production and to stimulate the industry in production of high quality fruit.

It is likely that there is an search for fruit which select the more edible forms of banana and not leaving the more early ones. In this manner it is probable that through a process of selection and preservation of types, the banana has been developed.

The composition of a sample of banana is given in the table below.

TABLE 1. The Chemical Composition of Varieties ofripe Bananas as Percentage of Fresh Pulp - Van Leeuwen

	Grain Michael	Lana San	Blanchard
Moisture	75.9	73.6	63.3
Reducing sugars	10.7	6.3	18.3
Non-reducing sugars	6.1	10.0	2.2
Starch	2.9	6.5	11.7
Total carbohydrate	19.8	22.8	30.2
Protein	0.5	1.0	1.2
Gross Fat	0.3	0.5	0.3
Fat in	0.3	0.4	0.1
Pectin	0.3	0.3	0.4
Ash	0.3	0.8	0.3

All contain a fair quantity of Calcium, Iron; some Zinc, Manganese, Copper, Iodine, Magnesium and Vitamins A, B, C and G.