

INTRODUCTION

The object of this report is to look into and discuss the cost of production of Pigeon Peas, Cajanus cajan, and also to report on the labour requirements for the crop, taking into account its seasonal spread.

It is by no means a statistical survey, as the production costs have been obtained through contacts known to the Agricultural Faculty of this University. For a true picture of costs, figures should have been taken from all the different topographical areas in Trinidad and Tobago. This was impossible since so few records have been kept on production costs of this crop.

Pigeon peas form part of the diet of a large sector of the community, and it has been the Agricultural Department of Trinidad and Tobago's concern to encourage greater production of pigeon peas from amongst the smaller farmers in these Islands. The 1962/63 crop was estimated at about 3000 acres in Trinidad and 1500 acres in Tobago. X

At the present time Gooding at the Food Crop Research Unit is trying to improve the yields of Pigeon peas through breeding; for without good yielding varieties very little economic progress can be achieved with this crop. Bowles (1961) has shown that on trial plots certain varieties yield up to 8,000 lbs of green Pigeon peas per acre. Bowles also did experiments on crop spacing; where as Hopkinson (1962) has worked on the manutial problems of the crop. Thus much of the fundamental husbandry has been looked into.

International Foods Limited have set up a canning plant and are processing green peas for the local market, thus there is an assured market available for the grower.

And so the object of this report is to throw some light onto the economic factors controlling the production of the crop.

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There has been very little or no work at all done on the cost of production of food crops grown on this Island. Thus it has been necessary to draw upon methods of crop analysis as used in the United Kingdom (N.A.A.S.). Cole (1960) estimated the costs of production and the labour requirements of Coconuts and Cocoa. This excellent report has been used as a basic guide in the writing of this dissertation.

Bowles (1962) estimated that a net profit of \$540.00 per acre could be obtained from the best varieties and \$330.00 per acre off the worst varieties. However these figures can be accepted as only very approximate, since he based his approximation on yields from trial plots, which often exceed 75% of field results. With the best variety of Pigeon pea the maximum yield off the field would be 5,000 lbs per acre, where as Bowles reckons on 8,000 lbs per acre. Thus although his economics of pigeon peas are of speculative interest insomuch as they show what might happen when all factors were at an optimum - and is the labour factor ever non limiting? - little can be drawn from his surmises that would be of use to this report.

3. THE LABOUR UNIT

The labour unit represents 8 hours work done by a man or a woman. Hence if the cost of a days work is known then the labour unit can be worked out. However there are complications:-

(a) Labour rates vary enormously throughout the country since there is no National Agricultural wage structure. Also to complicate things still further it is found that labour was paid on three bases:-

(i) By the Day, for which an agreed wage was paid for 8 hours work. This varied from \$5.00 on the Government farms to \$2.50 per day on private farms.

(ii) By the Task. Each labourer is given a measured task. Once completed and is accepted by the foreman, he or she may then take on another task or go home. - e.g. women on one estate were being paid \$2.00 per acre for outweeding.

(iii) By the Job...