

ABSTRACT

Under the present agricultural marketing system in Trinidad, these losses could be devised and as a result savings in the cost of agricultural produce moves from producing areas to the terminal markets marketing might be achieved.

of Port-of-Spain and San Fernando, only to return via the network of vendors, supermarkets, and ground provision shops to the rural areas and even to the same area of production. The centralised nature of the wholesaling system was hypothesised to be responsible for the high cost of marketing owing to the double transport cost, the heavy spoilage, and the restriction in the level of demand.

Based upon a study and description of the marketing system for dasheen, bananas, plantains, sweet potatoes, and yams, this thesis attempted to examine the foregoing hypothesis by comparing the costs under alternative transportation patterns with those associated with the present system. The components of the retail price were identified and measured for each of the selected crops according to market area and type of retail operation, and an analysis of the transportation costs was undertaken.

In developing the alternative transportation patterns for the selected crops an attempt was made to fully utilise the existing facilities and retail outlets. In all, seventeen alternatives were developed by permutating three trans-shipment points with various combinations of market areas. Then the costs associated with each of these alternatives were obtained through the use of the linear programming transportation model. These costs were then compared with those associated with the present system. This comparison revealed that no savings could be achieved from a change in the present arrangements. The analysis of

the components of the retail price, however, indicated that spoilage losses were a major cost factor. Therefore, through an examination of the factors which affect the incidence of spoilage, methods to control these losses could be devised and as a result savings in the cost of marketing might be achieved.

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