

INTRODUCTION.

Until recently the cattle population in Trinidad and other parts of the West Indies was very low. Table 1 shows cattle population figures for 1946.

TABLE 1

Estimated heads of cattle 1946.

Island	Cattle population
Jamaica	225,700
Trinidad	37,824
Leeward Islands	26,000
Grenada	8,300
St.Vincent	7,700

Source:
United Nations; information
for non-self governing
territories.
Summaries and analyses of
information transmitted
to the Secretary General
1948.

Animal husbandry was not an important way of life. Some of the large sugar cane estates kept appreciable numbers of cattle for transporting cane from field to factory, and for the production of manure for the cane fields. Milk production from these cows was more or less a by-product of the cane industry. These estates fed their cattle on cut fodder in the rainy season and sugar cane tops in the dry season. Some peasant farmers kept a few cattle mainly for draught and milk. They depended on roadside grazing and cut fodder from anywhere it was available. The existence of highly profitable cash crops (sugar cane and cocoa) on which most of the people were profitably employed, did not particularly encourage the people to take to less attractive enterprises such as cattle rearing. Highly productive cattle were not available. The existing cross bred cattle referred to as 'Creole cattle' were very poor producers of milk and meat. The almost complete absence of indigenous grasses of any value for grazing or fodder made the feeding of cattle difficult and uneconomic.