

INTRODUCTION

Before Hurricane Janet in September, 1955, agriculture in Grenada was almost entirely concerned with the production of cocoa and nutmeg. The hurricane devastated the nutmeg plantations and severely damaged much of the cocoa. Bananas were introduced as a major crop as a result. At present, bananas, nutmeg and cocoa are the three major products of the island.

Although the overall demand for cocoa on the world market appears to be increasing, prices (and therefore the profitability of cocoa growing) fluctuate over a wide range. In 1954 the world price was £550 per ton, which fell to £100 per ton in 1965 and by December 1968 had risen to over £450 per ton.

As regards nutmeg, Grenada markets a lower quality, higher priced product than Indonesia, and is therefore in an inferior competitive position.

In the case of bananas, Grenada has the advantage of a protected U.K. market which at present ensures a regular and acceptable income for growers. However, there is increasing agitation in the United Kingdom for reduction or removal of restrictions on banana imports. If trade barriers were completely removed, Grenada would be in direct competition with Latin American producers, who could effectively push Grenadian producers out of the market.

In view of the uncertainties described here, there would appear to be a need to diversify agricultural production in Grenada which would be a means of reducing some of the present risks.

Avocados are common throughout the island, mostly as scattered

individual seedling trees in plantations of other crops. Grenada has a large surplus of production over home requirements and most of the crop is left to waste, there being no export at the present time. The fruit produced are generally of a high quality, although there is a great deal of variation in size, shape and colour of fruit between trees. The principal months of production are July, August and September, but some trees bear as early as May and others as late as December. This fruiting season could no doubt be extended by the use of new varieties.

Potential markets for avocados exist in other Caribbean Islands and possibly further afield, for instance in Canada and the United Kingdom.

However, the fruit is well known to be highly susceptible to injury and extremes of temperature, and becomes over-ripe within several days of picking under normal conditions. These problems prevent the cheap transport of large quantities of avocados at present.

The aim of this project is to examine the problems and possibilities of avocado transport and storage, using facilities already available in Grenada. It is hoped that this preliminary study will serve as a useful guide for further work on the topic.

Dry weight	13 - 30%
Protein (in pulp)	0.82 - 4.35%
Sugars	1.32 - 5.35%
Fats (in pulp)	1.77 - 31.75%
Acid	0.54 - 3.82%

These distinct zones are generally recognized: the Northern, the Southern and the West Indian. The project is mainly concerned with the