

## A B S T R A C T

The coconut industry of Trinidad and Tobago is currently experiencing a critical period in its history. Consequently policies have to be formulated that would halt the present declining trend in production.

This study examines the Cost-Revenue structure and profitability. It forecasts the future demand for, and production of, copra and identifies the major obstacles to rapid growth in the industry.

A stratified, random survey, using a prepared questionnaire, was conducted. The findings included data with respect to land use and characteristics of crop; wage rates and employee age structure; machinery and equipment; agricultural practices and methods of cultivation; pests and diseases; and cost and revenue. Attitudes of the farmers toward the industry were also ascertained.

The study traces the historical development of the industry, followed by a more detailed treatment of the coconut industry in which consideration is given to the physical, structural and industrial framework within which coconut farming operates. The procedure used for forecasting local coconut oil production and consumption was to produce market forecasts by the process of generating on a priori demand/supply gap and then resolving the gap.

In general, the findings showed that size of holding is one of the major factors affecting production and profitability in the industry. This is shown through the interaction of farm size, capital inputs, yields and other related variables. The comparison of supply and demand projections revealed an increasing and substantial excess of demand over supply. Several obstacles are associated with the present declining trend in production, the most important being old-age of plantations, poor agronomic practices, disease problems and inadequate supply of labour. Accordingly, the study makes recommendations necessary to transform and rejuvenate the industry.