

ABSTRACT

This study brings to light some of the basic features of domestic food production in Belize. The two main groups of farmers - Milpa and Mennonite - were identified and attempts were made to analyse the favourable and unfavourable factors which affect both farming systems.

A random sample of 20 Milpa farms and 12 Mennonite farms were chosen. The selected farms were thoroughly studied with respect to their resources, farming operations, costs and returns and profitability of their enterprises.

The study revealed that the apparent success of the Mennonites was due mainly to their dedication to hard work and to the organization of their efforts at the community level. On the other hand the relatively poor performance of the Milperos can be attributed to their limited access to the productive resources and inadequate institutional arrangements.

It is argued that major changes are necessary in the Milperos' production practices if their output is to be improved. Suggestions have been made as to what steps may be taken to improve the conditions under which the Milperos operate. Since they are desirous of increasing their incomes, and the Government of Belize is anxious to increase food production, it is anticipated that action will be taken towards this end.