

SUMMARY

The history of tobacco growing in Trinidad and at I.C.T.A. has been briefly outlined. Hitherto the emphasis has been solely on the growing of dark air cured leaf for low quality pipe and cigar tobacco, but at the beginning of the 1953-54 crop season a small flue barn was built at the Old Farm to test the possibilities of growing and curing flue cured tobacco suitable for cigarettes.

Two fertiliser trials were carried out to determine approximately the optimum amounts of pen manure, N, P₂O₅, and K₂O necessary to produce high quality leaf. Both trials received almost identical treatments, but the first was sown on Oct. 23rd., and the second on Dec. 17th. The aim of the second trial was to confirm any results from the first experiment, and to enable a comparison between early and late sowings. For various reasons the first experiment was a partial failure, while the results from the second one were not fully available when this dissertation had to be prepared. A third pilot trial was also attempted to compare methods of planting, but again the results were not ready in time. It is hoped to add a postscript at a later date, but meanwhile certain claims can be made with a fair degree of accuracy.

Good quality flue cured tobacco can be grown and cured in Trinidad, but it is a skilled business with many practical difficulties, particularly as regards curing. Most of these difficulties can be eliminated given suitable soil, good management, and sufficient practical experience.

Sturdy, uniform seedlings in ample numbers are of permanent importance. Hence cloth covered nursery beds built well in the open are more likely to produce good seedlings than more elaborate beds built in shaded and sheltered surroundings.

Tobacco should not be transplanted on prepared ridges, particularly a dry season crop. A better method is to plant on a flat surface, and then mould up afterwards with each successive weeding.

Late sown crops yield as well as early ones if irrigation is available in a dry year, but if sown too late the harvest may coincide with the onset of the rainy season.

No information is yet available on the best combination of fertilisers, but will be added later.

Field 3 of the Old Farm is not suitable for growing good tobacco, or for experimental work.

Detailed practical suggestions applicable to I.C.T.A. are included, besides photographs of the harvesting equipment.

Brief mention is made of trials on flue cured tobacco carried out by the Tobacco Leaf Development Company of Jamaica.