

INTRODUCTION.

This report is a survey of milk production from cattle, and its various aspects in Trinidad. It was allocated to the writer, to form part of his course as a refresher student at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, and carried out under the guidance of Professor Harrison, who suggested methods for obtaining information. The object is to obtain information regarding the present position of dairying in Trinidad, with especial attention given to breeding.

The investigation, though it entailed visits and enquiries over the western half of the island, was mainly confined to districts within ten miles of Port of Spain, where, some two hundred visits were paid in approximately one hundred and seventy hours, and about five hundred miles travelled by car. Visiting commenced in November 1939, and continued at intervals till June 1940.

Dairying, especially in Trinidad, presents an infinite variety of interesting problems, facts and conjectures for study, and is an industry to which much attention should be paid, especially when it is learnt that well over £100,000. worth of condensed milk is imported annually. This report will be confined mainly to breeding, feeding and management, with particular attention to stocks used. These three points go hand in hand, and, though management and feeding are extremely important, without the animal they are useless.

Trinidad.

Trinidad lies ten degrees north of the equator, and is therefore tropical; it has a fairly even temperature varying around eighty degrees Fahrenheit throughout the year. There is a wet and a dry season, the latter normally extending from February till May, though for the last few years these have not been so definite as might appear from their names.

The island is mainly agricultural, consisting of estates which were originally from six hundred to eight hundred acres each in extent; now some have combined either privately or by companies to form estates of several thousands of acres, while others have been subdivided to give the small peasant holdings; this accounts for the smallest units dealt with being grouped in different areas. The small size of these holdings is due to the estate owners, when the slaves were freed, putting up the price of land and limiting the amount bought to less than could give a livelihood, so that the estates were assured of labour. However at present most estates are making increased use of mechanical appliances, and so reducing the need for labour, thus not only will land settlement be more favourably regarded, but there will be an increasing demand for such schemes.

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East Indians, who originally came to Trinidad as indentured labourers, usually are the owners of peasant stock, as other types are said to be generally too lazy to give the constant attention which all livestock require. These people number one third of the total population of the island.