

REPORT ON ROUTINE LIVESTOCK

MANAGEMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT STOCK FARM, ST. JOSEPH, TRINIDAD

PREFACE

This report is an account of the practical work carried out on the St. Joseph Government Stock Farm, Trinidad as part requirement of the Refresher Course of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture. It is intended to cover only the major animals such as Cattle, Pigs, Goats, Horses and Donkeys. No special treatments are given to the other classes of livestock on this farm as they did not fall within the scope of my investigation. Such animals include Poultry, Rabbits, Guinea pigs and Buffaloes.

For clarity and ease of treatment, I have presented the report under five headings thus:-

(i) Introduction:-

This section deals with the importance of livestock in Agriculture, particularly in the Tropical Colonies where proper handling and feeding of livestock are still in their infancy, and where most people are still not yet awake to the value and utilisation of livestock and livestock products. The uses to which the various classes of livestock are put in various parts of the world are discussed here, and where possible their relative merits in any particular work or function clearly stated.

(ii) Routine Management on the Government Farm:-

Under this section I have discussed the actual routine management adopted for the various classes of livestock on the St. Joseph Farm, and where possible the methods of management practised in Nigeria and other parts of the world, e.g. England. No details of breeding schemes are given, but an outline of the policy for each stock is discussed. A short account of suitable European breeds imported into various parts of the Tropics for grading up local stocks is also included, especially the section dealing with Pigs.

(iii) Feeds and Feeding Stuffs:-

One of the principal limiting factors to animal husbandry in the Tropics is the problem of feeding - lack of a proper knowledge of feeding and available feeding stuffs. I have, therefore, devoted a good part of my report to this problem. A full description of the various tropical feeding stuffs (composition, method of preparation, their functions in the animal body etc.) are discussed and where possible any evil effects produced by their excessive or improper use are emphasized.

(iv) Pastures and Grassland Management:-

This section treats briefly, the establishment, and maintenance of grass plots in the Tropics - methods of planting, suitable planting materials and manuring have been outlined. A brief description of a few of the commonest tropical grasses and forage crops is also included.

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(v) Diseases:-

No report on livestock in the tropics can be complete without including a chapter on Tropical Diseases. After the problems of feeding, the next important limiting factor to successful livestock keeping in the Tropics is disease. This is a very wide subject in itself and can not be fully dealt with in a report of this type. I have only attempted to give a very brief account of a few of the most important and devastating diseases, outlining the methods of prevention and/or treatment adopted in Trinidad or Nigeria. My main object is to bring out clearly the odds against stock farmers who can afford to neglect the golden rule of "prevention is better than cure". Full preventive measures for each disease are outlined. For all serious cases the necessity of seeking the expert advice and help of a Veterinary Officer cannot be overstressed.

(vi) Bibliography:-

The last section of the report is devoted entirely to a list of books consulted for the drafting of this report.

The time I had for the investigation for this report was extremely short. This was due firstly to the fact that the Senior Lecturer in Animal Husbandry arrived at Trinidad late in the year, and secondly, because of the difficulty experienced in arranging the course at the Government Stock Farm St. Joseph. The work was only begun at the last week of the second term, and the third term being extremely short and busy I had not much time at my disposal to thoroughly explore the statistical aspect of the farm work. Only a few of the important records were examined and relevant extracts taken (e.g. live weight records of calves, milk yield records etc.) No weight records of pigs and goats were kept and so I could not obtain figures to compare growth rates of the breeds on the farm.

As a result of the above stated facts, most of the conclusions drawn in the second chapter of this report are based on my observations at the time, or from results of previous experiments and investigations or from the experiences and observations of the senior officials of the farm with whom I had various discussions.

The method adopted for obtaining information for this report was as follows:- I attached myself to work on the various sections of the farm for a specific period (two to four days) and actually worked with the stockmen in charge of the sections. At the end of the period, I drew up a series of questions and discussed with the head stock-man for the particular section. All doubtful points and questions beyond the capability of the stock-boys (policy etc.) were taken up to the office and discussed with the Senior Farm Staff.

Several books were consulted. A few of these references were made at Trinidad owing to lack of time, but the greater part was done at the Imperial Institute Library, Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London S.W.7.

I am greatly indebted to the staff of the Imperial Institute Library for the willing help they always gave to me in recommending books or sorting out the various books and publications I asked for.

I have attached a few photographs at the end (Enclosures *in Appendix*) showing the breeds of pigs, goats and certain important farm operations like machine milking and cattle dipping seen on the St. Joseph Stock Farm.

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