

A SURVEY OF THE FOOD GARDENS  
OF THREE COUNTIES OF TRINIDAD

1. INTRODUCTION.

Surveys in agriculture are needed before the planning of any large-scale scheme for, say, a marketing organisation or for the intensification of home food production.

A person's general impressions of the agriculture of an area can be misleading. The exact information that only surveys can give is therefore required.

A problem of considerable local interest, and on which exact information is lacking, is that of the composition and production of food gardens in Trinidad and the possibilities of increasing the quantities of food marketed from them, particularly in view of the large imports of flour into the colony (nearly 120 million lbs. in 1954) (Statistical Digest No. 5).

After discussion under the chairmanship of Dr. A.L. Jolly the team (see below) chose to survey the composition and production of food gardens in the counties of Caroni, St. David and St. Andrew. Emphasis was placed on the "staple crops", that is, the ground food provisions *grown in Trinidad.* A necessary part of our project was to devise a satisfactory means of measuring quantitatively the constituent crops of a mixture.

Other subjects were considered and rejected. It was felt that our survey should give us some practice of measuring in the field. For this and other reasons a survey of the use of fertilisers and feeding-stuffs in Trinidad was not undertaken.

We decided not to repeat the Land Utilisation Survey carried out by a group of students (D.T.A. Reports 1956) last year using a map as a frame. They had developed their technique of line sampling to as high a degree of accuracy

as could be achieved with the given resources. The application of this technique to other areas was ruled out by their hilly nature or their distance from the College.

The available resources of labour, money and equipment must be first considered before planning any survey. For the planning, execution and analysis of our survey there was a team of eight post-graduate students who could afford a number of afternoons in the first and second terms for the planning and analysis, and a fortnight between these terms, during the Christmas vacation, for the execution of the field work. Up to six cars were available and money was available for travelling, paper, etc.

With these resources we could not adequately survey food gardens over a large area unless a frame (of lists of food gardeners) was already available. Fortunately this was provided by the Agricultural Survey of 1956 carried out by the Trinidad and Tobago Government Statistics and Agriculture departments. We also had access to maps on which the houses of these growers could be identified.