

Introduction.

The continued fertility of soils, especially those of the wet tropics is dependent upon the evolution of a sound system of permanent agriculture in which livestock must play an ever increasing part. The importance of livestock as an integral part of general farm husbandry cannot therefore be over emphasised.

The acquisition of capital essential for further development is, in the main, the limiting factor to production. Education is also necessary in order to obtain more efficient methods of management and production. If therefore millions of peasants in livestock areas are to benefit and enjoy a higher plane of living, improved animals possessing a reasonably high standard of production for milk, meat, work and other by-products must be made available to them. This will go a long way to providing the economic incentive for a sound system of mixed farming, which appears to be most suitable for developing agriculture in the tropics.

To add to the shrinking world supplies of meat, attention must now be turned to peasant livestock which though for the moment is mostly uneconomically maintained constitutes a potential and valuable source of world meat supplies. Many governments have long realised this shortcoming, and various attempts have been made towards overcoming the problem. Improved high yielding breeds have been imported to various areas in the tropics with ranging degrees of success. But diverse factors have interacted to militate against the achievement of the desired results. In many instances, invested capital has been lost. In some cases success has produced an incentive to further work, and this project is an attempt to review the various attempts that have been made to improve the livestock in the wet tropics.