

## ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine the adequacy of the methods of selection used in determining the composition of the student body at the Jamaica School of Agriculture. The efficiency of the selection mechanism in predicting the performance of individuals who had made a choice to study agriculture, was the main consideration.

Attention was therefore focussed on past educational attainment and certification, academic ability and aptitude, and other situational variables; social and economic status, school type, sex of students and urban/rural home location. These constituted the independent variables, with final theory grade and farm practice being the dependent variables. The data collected from the sample of 81 students were subject to the following procedure:

'T' Tests of Difference Analysis revealed that:

- (a) there is no difference between male and female J.S.A. students on any of the independent variables and one of the criterion measures final theory grade;
- (b) male students scored significantly higher than female students on the other criterion measure, final farm practice grade.

Correlation Matrix Analysis revealed that:

- (a) No significant relationship exists between any of the independent

variables and final farm practice grade;

- (b) there is a significant correlation between final theory grade and final farm practice grade ( $p < .01$ )

Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis: for the total sample. This procedure, while not proving a strong measure did reveal that the best predictors of the criterion final theory grade were variable 4 certification, variable 5, the Jamaica School of Agriculture ability and aptitude test and to a lesser extent variable 3 past educational background. These together accounted for 18.2% of the variance explained in the criterion measure.

The results indicate that:

- (a) the selection mechanism now in use at the Jamaica School of Agriculture, level of certification together with Ability and Aptitude Test while fairly effective in terms of predicting success in theoretical areas cannot ensure that the most "suitable" and "talented" students are recruited to the school;
- (b) the selection measures are very inefficient in predicting success in practical agriculture.