

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

The production of foodstuffs in Trinidad and Tobago is insufficient to meet the demands of the increasing population. As a result a large part of the Colony's food supply is imported from outside sources. The bulk of the locally grown foodstuff is produced by peasant farmers whose efficiency of production leaves much to be desired. It is, however, believed that food production could be greatly increased by the adoption of three measures:- (1) Increasing the efficiency of production of the peasant farmers; (2) Replacing "Shifting Cultivation" by a stable agricultural system; (3) By increasing the area under cultivation. These measures should be adopted into a system of Agriculture which would meet the needs of the Colony, maintain the fertility of the land, and utilize it to its maximum efficiency. Before such a system could be developed it is necessary to obtain a clear picture of Agriculture as practised in the Colony. Much information could be obtained by carrying out a number of surveys covering all aspects of Agriculture in the Colony. It would further be necessary to undertake a number of detailed investigation in order to obtain a more precise knowledge of many of the findings of the general surveys.

The Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture has realized the need for such investigation and has organised a system of surveys covering the field of peasant agriculture in the Colony. Surveys in the St. Augustine area are made by post graduate students to introduce them to the value of survey approach to the study of peasant agriculture in the Tropics. These surveys cover a single aspect of peasant agriculture in the area. The present survey aims at obtaining general information concerning poultry production in North Trinidad. Recommendations are made in the light of the information obtained.

The survey was undertaken during the period October 1949 to April 1950. The first few weeks were spent in carrying out a

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reconnaissance survey of the area so as to gain some knowledge of the local background. The rest of the time was spent in making visits to poultry keepers in several parts of North Trinidad. Visits were also paid to feed suppliers and to persons engaged in the sale of baby chicks. The work done by the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture on poultry husbandry was studied.

In the original plan of this project it was proposed to study the behaviour of a number of peasant type fowls under improved conditions of housing, management and feeding. Unfortunately birds of suitable type were not secured and as a consequence that part of the exercise was dropped.

There are four major soil types encountered in this area. These have been classified by Chenery as follows:

1. St. Augustine Loam
2. River Estate Fine Sand
3. Streatham Lodge Fine Sand and Loam
4. Pasesa Clay

The St. Augustine Loam and River Estate Fine Sand are free draining soils occupying the higher levels of the area. St. Augustine Loam is found principally North of the railway line which runs in an east to west direction. The River Estate Fine Sand is south of this railway line. The Streatham Lodge Fine Sand and Loam is to the south or fringing the St. Augustine Loam and varies in drainage status from free to impeded. The Pasesa Clay is the principal soil type of the Area south of the Churchill-Imperial Highway. The drainage is classified as impeded.

These soils have been under cultivation for a number of years. The upper layers of the original soil profile have been lost leaving behind a soil low in fertility status.

The average annual rainfall in the area is approximately 100 inches and is recorded for periods extending from January to May