

THE COCONUT INDUSTRY 1973

W. R. N. Nathanael
*Coconut Research Institute,
 Lunuwila, Sri Lanka.*

GENERAL

As anticipated in planting circles consequent on the severe drought conditions that prevailed during the preceding year, 1973 has been an extremely poor year for coconut from the point of view of production.

The estimated production of coconut for 1973 is 2,272 million nuts representing an unprecedented decline over the previous years. In relation to 1972 (3,073 million nuts) the decrease is 26.1%. In terms of the average production for the past 5 years (2,771 million nuts) the drop is 18.0%. Sri Lanka's peak production estimated at 3,148 million nuts was recorded in 1964. The 1973 figure is lower than this by 27.8%.

The reflection of the decrease in production in 1973 (over the preceding year) on the volume of exports amounts to 66.5%. In terms of the average for the past 5 years, the exports are lower by 59.0% and in terms of the 1964 record there has been a sharp decline of 74.1%.

Despite the low volume and total value of coconut products exported, an all-time record in prices was recorded during 1973. The previous record for prices amounting to Rs. 302.62 was registered in 1968. In relation to this the figure for 1973 (Rs. 343.79) is higher by 13.6% and also higher by 61.6% in comparison with the previous year. The average price of coconut products for the past five years has been 263.67. The 1973 figure is higher than this by 30.4%.

Coconut Fertilizer Subsidy Scheme

The Coconut Cultivation Board continued to be responsible for the operation of the Coconut Fertilizer Subsidy Scheme in 1973 as in the previous year. The Coconut Cultivation Board is one of the Boards established under the provisions of the Coconut Development Act No. 46 of 1971.

The response to the Coconut Fertilizer Subsidy Scheme since its inception has been encouraging. Prior to the introduction of this scheme in 1956, the quantity of fertilizer used on coconut lands was 10 to 12 thousand tons. This has progressively increased to 60,000 tons under the Subsidy Scheme.

Details pertaining to the issue of fertilizer under the subsidy scheme to permit holders during 1971, 1972 and 1973 are given below. The 1973 figure in respect of quantity of fertilizer actually drawn is tentative and is based on information so far received from the Ceylon Fertilizer Corporation.

<i>Details pertaining to Fertilizer Distribution</i>	<i>Estates (Over 20 acres)</i>			<i>Smallholders (Under 20 acres)</i>			<i>Co-operative Societies</i>		
	1971	1972	1973	1971	1972	1973	1971	1972	1973
No. of Permit holders	2,557	2,149	2,283	14,829	15,015	19,657	600	729	1,070
Acreage in respect of which applications were received	215,744	184,542	189,102	98,244	80,496	113,143	34,974	24,587	37,610
Quantity of fertilizer (tons) applied for	49,183	46,336	42,760	32,058	28,304	32,807	10,506	7,065	11,157
Quantity of fertilizer (tons) actually drawn	27,323	21,544	15,330	15,330	15,636	12,250	6,027	5,028	4,018

It is observed that the drought which prevailed during the course of the year 1973, the uncertainty over the ceiling on land, and non availability of coconut fertilizer contributed to the decline in the use of fertilizer during the year which amounted to 31,599 tons. The Coconut Cultivation Board has however established fertilizer stores in some of the coconut growing areas of the Island including Chilaw, Kuliypitiya, Kurunegala, Veyangoda and Ambalangoda to enable smallholders to draw their requirements in their own areas.

In the outstations, arrangements were made for Coconut Development Officers to issue fertilizer permits to smallholders owning land 10 acres and less in extent.

Authorised Dealers were appointed in various coconut growing areas of Sri Lanka to enable permit holders to draw their quota of fertilizer from them thereby incurring less on transport costs.

As an encouragement to the smallholder, the lower limit of land for which fertilizer permits were issued was reduced from 1/2 acre to 1/4 acre and correspondingly the limit on palms was reduced from 60 to 30.

Desiccated Coconut

During 1973, 76 mills applied for registration under the Coconut Processing Board, but only 68 of them complied with the conditions

necessary for registration. Only 37-50 mills functioned during the first half of the year, whilst 59-66 mills were manufacturing desiccated coconut towards the latter half.

83.74 million pounds of desiccated coconut were manufactured in 1973. This was less than the quantities manufactured during the years 1971 and 1972. All the desiccated coconut manufactured was subjected to routine sampling on a 10% basis for both bacteriological and quality examination. Where *salmonella* contamination was evident on routine examination, such batches were subjected to 100% resampling and examination.

A total of 11,348 samples of desiccated coconut were examined in the bacteriological laboratory of the Board during the year and *salmonella* contamination was detected in 34 samples from 14 mills, amounting to approximately 0.31% of the routine samples. Seven serotypes of *salmonella* were identified from the samples examined.

A total of 12,965 samples were analysed in the quality laboratory of the Board during the year. They were examined for moisture content, presence of parings and specks, colour, odour, grading and oil separation. Out of the samples tested, 1,487 were found to be sub-standard in respect of one or more of the quality requirements. Approximately 13.6% of the routine samples examined for physical quality were subsequently resampled on higher percentages on account of their being found defective on first examination.

COCONUT PRODUCTION IN 1973

1. Production	<i>Nut Equivalent</i>
1. Production in 1973	2,272 million
2. Production in 1972	3,073 million
3. Aver. production last 5 years	2,771 million
4. Previous production record (1964)	3,148 million
5. Decrease from 1972	26.1%
6. Decrease from last 5 years' average	18.0%
7. Decrease from previous record	27.8%
2. Exports by Volume	
(a) Amount:	
1. Exports in 1973	421,866,556 nuts
2. Exports in 1972	1,257,728,084 nuts
3. Average for last 5 years	1,028,939,846 nuts
4. Previous record (1964)	162,580,600 nuts
5. Decrease from 1972	66.5%
6. Decrease from last 5 years' average	59.0%
7. Decrease from previous record	74.1%

(b) Distribution:		C' Oil	Copra	D.C.	Fresh nuts
1973	..	34.8%	3.2%	60.8%	1.2%
1972	..	55.2%	17.4%	26.6%	0.8%

Exports by value

(a) Amount

1. 1973	..	..	..	..	145,031,471
2. 1972	..	..	..	..	267,636,141
3. Aver. for last 5 years	..	..	..	..	269,362,183
4. Previous record 1968	..	..	..	..	333,819,816
5. Decrease over 1972	..	..	..	..	45.8%
6. Decrease from last 5 years' average	..	..	..	..	46.2%
7. Decrease from previous record	..	..	..	..	56.6%

Distribution:

		C' Oil	Copra	D.C.	Fresh nuts
1973	..	18.5%	2.5%	76.6%	2.4%
1972	..	49.5%	19.3%	29.6%	1.6%

3. Average Value of Coconut Products

						Rs. per 1,000 nuts
1. 1973	..	..	..	..	..	343.79
2. 1972	..	..	..	..	..	212.79
3. Average for last 5 years	..	..	..	..	..	263.67
4. Previous record 1968	..	..	..	..	..	302.62
5. Increase over 1972	..	..	..	..	..	61.6%
6. Increase over last 5 years' average	..	..	..	..	..	30.4%
7. Increase over the previous record	..	..	..	..	..	13.6%

4. Exports of Coconut Products 1973

Item	Quantity	Value (Rs.)	Nut Equivalent
Fresh nuts	.. 5,117,764 (No.)	3,459,845	5,117,764
D.C.	.. 742,934 (Cwt)	111,128,857	256,312,230
Coconut oil	.. 361,210 (Cwt)	26,889,056	146,741,562
Copra	.. 54,780 (Cwt)	3,553,713	13,695,000
Total	.. 1,158,924 (Cwt)	145,031,471	421,866,556
C' Poonac	.. 234,727 (Cwt)	3,214,492	
Mattress fibre	.. 1,446,411 (Cwt)	36,367,834	
Bristle fibre	.. 578,004 (Cwt)	35,795,714	
Coir yarn	.. 40,512 (Cwt)	3,300,095	
C' shell charcoal	.. 566,635 (Cwt)	8,450,691	
Total	.. 2,866,289 (Cwt)	87,128,826	
Grand Total	.. 4,025,213 (Cwt)	232,160,297	421,866,556

5. Percentage Distribution of Products by Value

		<i>C'Oil</i>	<i>Copra</i>	<i>D.C.</i>	<i>F. Nuts</i>	<i>Fibre*</i>
1973	..	12.2%	1.6%	50.4%	1.6%	34.2%
1972	..	40.0%	15.7%	24.0%	1.3%	19.0%

(* Fibre = *Mattress fibre* + *Bristle Fibre* + *Coir Yarn*)

6. Copra Sales

				<i>Candies</i>
Total Copra Sales	1973	..	..	120,971
Total Copra Sales	1972	..	..	707,118

Conversion Rates

1 Ton of Copra	=	5,000 nuts
1 Ton of C'Oil	=	8,125 nuts
1 Ton of D.C.	=	6,900 nuts

MONTHLY AVERAGE PRICES OF COCONUT PRODUCTS 1973

<i>Month</i>	<i>COPRA</i>		<i>C'OIL</i>		<i>D.C.</i>	
	<i>Per Candy</i>		<i>Per Ton</i>		<i>Per lb.</i>	
	1972	1973	1972	1973	1972	1973
January ..	192.10	262.23	1,250.00	1,250.00	0.54	0.71
February ..	183.29	282.80	1,204.74	1,355.26	0.54	0.79
March ..	191.27	295.40	1,170.24	1,513.64	0.59	0.75
April ..	184.58	317.33	1,152.06	1,650.00	0.65	0.72
May ..	184.97	320.67	1,114.28	1,523.68	0.62	0.74
June ..	171.37	350.96	1,054.28	1,500.00	0.59	0.88
July ..	167.66	352.25	924.25	1,500.00	0.59	1.15
August ..	199.77	308.25	951.82	1,500.00	0.63	0.95
September	228.74	325.06	1,076.32	1,500.00	0.66	0.85
October ..	214.26	314.13	1,248.40	1,500.00	0.67	0.94
November	211.09	344.95	1,226.00	1,500.00	0.57	1.07
December	228.94	396.27	1,250.00	1,500.00	0.66	1.24
Average	196.50	322.52	1,135.20	1,482.71	0.61	0.90
% departure	+64.1 %		+30.6%		+47.5%	

RAINFALL (STATIONS IN COCONUT GROWING AREAS) 1973

<i>Month</i>	<i>Chilaw</i>	<i>Madampe</i>	<i>Puttalam</i>	<i>Kurunegala</i>	<i>Lunuwila</i>
January ..	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00
February ..	2.20	1.36	1.35	0.29	4.04
March ..	4.79	3.37	2.23	6.60	7.22
April ..	11.00	6.71	5.07	8.06	9.44
May ..	7.21	4.97	3.02	3.47	6.66
June ..	5.09	6.35	4.99	4.51	9.54
July ..	1.89	1.22	0.60	6.38	4.64
August ..	0.35	0.46	0.21	2.85	2.61
September ..	0.03	0.57	0.05	1.84	0.82
October ..	7.13	10.77	12.72	8.01	9.69
November ..	14.66	9.21	3.59	5.85	18.71
December ..	11.46	10.43	16.18	10.45	8.10
Total ..	65.81	55.42	50.01	58.32	81.47