

ACREAGE UNDER COCONUT IN CEYLON

By U. B. M. EKANAYAKE

The Census of Agriculture of 1962 estimated the total coconut acreage of Ceylon at 1,152,418 acres. This figure is widely accepted and is taken into consideration in a number of plans on the future development of the coconut industry of this country. The distribution of the area under coconut by size of holdings according to the Census of Agriculture is given in Table I.

<i>Size of holding in acres</i>	<i>Extent of land under coconut in acres</i>
under $\frac{1}{4}$	6,114
$\frac{1}{4}$ — $\frac{1}{2}$	18,322
$\frac{1}{2}$ —1	42,205
1—2	158,637
$2\frac{1}{2}$ —5	177,807
5—10	176,541
10—25	161,603
25—50	102,397
over 50	308,792
Total	1,152,418

TABLE I. Distribution of the land area under coconut by size of holding

Source: Census of Agriculture, 1962, volume II, Land Utilization, (1966) p. 27.

The aerial surveys, of 1956, gave some interesting information on the distribution of coconut lands; and Table II shows the distribution of these lands according to climatic zones.

<i>Climatic Zone</i>	<i>Coconut Acreage</i>	<i>Homestead gardens</i>
Wet zone	230,840	839,290
Intermediate zone	287,640	322,670
Dry zone	100,430	262,350
Total	618,910	1,424,310

TABLE II. Distribution of coconut lands by climatic zones

Source: A Forest Inventory of Ceylon. Hunting Survey Corporation Ltd., Canada-Ceylon Colombo Plan Project, (1961) p. 48.

The agricultural census and the aerial surveys give different figures for the total coconut acreage. This discrepancy is mainly due to "differences in concepts and definitions" adopted by in the surveys.* The figure from the aerial surveys relate to the acreage under pure stands of coconut; that from the agricultural census also includes coconut in homestead gardens. The extent of homestead gardens, according to climatic zones, are given in Table II.

The question now arises as to which of the figures (1,152,418 and 618,910) should be used in planning. It appears that in planning with regard to fertilizer use, pest and disease control and replanting the total extent of land under coconut, (i.e. 1,152,418 acres) should be considered. In the case of other projects like the development of the dairy industry in coconut estates, it may be prudent to consider the acreage under pure stands of coconut in the wet zone only, in the first instance (i.e. 230,840 acres).

It is now necessary to assess the distribution of the 618,910 acres of coconut in pure stands according to size of holdings and revenue districts. A similar assessment in regard to coconut in homestead gardens should prove useful.

NEW TECHNIQUE TO DETECT COCONUT PEST

A technique for detection of root wilt disease of coconut trees has been developed by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute.

This was reported to the governing body of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research which met here yesterday under the chairmanship of Mr. Jagjivan Ram.

The root wilt disease is known to cause serious damage to coconut plantations in the South.

Tests have established that a virus is associated with the disease. This finding has led to the development of a rapid serological technique for the detection of the disease which is expected to be of great help in identifying coconut palms harbouring the virus and thereby helping in the eradication of the infection in the trees.—PTI.

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*Report of the Land Utilization Committee—August, 1967.
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