

FERTILISER RATIONING AND DISTRIBUTION

INTERIM REPORT.

This report covers the activities of the scheme up to the end of the 1st Distribution Quarter, i.e., up to the middle of February.

The uncertain position in regard to fertiliser stocks and future arrivals in Ceylon of manures, together with difficulties which had arisen in connection with internal transport, made it obvious in the autumn of 1942 that steps would have to be taken to ration issues of fertilisers and to organise a system of delivery in order that all estates might receive their fair and appropriate share of whatever fertilisers might be available.

At the Meeting of the General Committee of the Planters' Association of Ceylon held on 18th September, 1942, I was asked to act as Organiser of such a scheme. A small Committee, under the Chairmanship of Mr. R. C. Scott, and consisting of representatives of the Planters' Association of Ceylon, Ceylon Estates Proprietary Association, the Fertiliser Firms and myself and Mr. T. E. H. O'Brien representing the Tea Research Institute and Rubber Research Scheme, respectively, was set up to work out the necessary preliminary details. The proposals after very full consideration by all concerned, including special meetings of Visiting Agents representing both the tea and rubber industries, were approved by the Ceylon Estates Proprietary Association and the Planters' Association of Ceylon, and I was authorised on the 11th November, 1942, by the Emergency Committee of the Planters' Association to proceed with the scheme. Preliminary

steps in anticipation of such sanction had already been taken by me and deliveries of rationed manure in fact began on the 16th November.

In brief the basis of the scheme is as follows:—

(1) The scheme is a voluntary one and is not restricted to members of the Planters' Association of Ceylon and Ceylon Estates Proprietary Association, but applies equally to all persons requiring fertilisers for the production of tea and rubber and the figures given later will show that this provision has been fully implemented.

(2) The quotas issued cover estate allotments for twelve months dating from 1st October, 1942. As deliveries of rationed manure necessarily only began at a later date any manure received by estates outside the ration issues, after October 1st in the case of tea and November 16th in the case of rubber, count against the quotas. Such deductions are calculated in terms of the weight of standard mixture equivalent in nitrogen content to the manure actually delivered to the estate.

(3) *Rationing.*—Persons requiring manure were required to complete a form giving details of the acreage under cultivation and in the case of tea the standard assessment of the estate and the actual crop harvested for the twelve months ending 30th September were also tabulated, standard assessments being checked against figures supplied by the Tea Controller. Fertiliser permits were then issued by the Organiser, Fertiliser Ration-

ing. to all applicants on the following basis :—

- (i) *Tea*.—The nitrogen allowance is on a sliding scale based on the productive capacity of the estate, ranging from an allowance of 10 lbs. per acre on a crop of 200 lbs. per acre to a maximum of 42 lbs. per acre on crops of 1,300 lbs. and over per acre. "Crop" is defined to be the Standard Assessment of the estate or the actual crop (excluding bought leaf) produced in the twelve months ending 30th September, 1942 whichever is the higher.

As figures based on Standard Assessments had already been classified, in order to avoid delay in starting the scheme, the original permits were all issued, and distribution in the 1st quarter made, on this basis, but such permits have since been revised in the case of all estates entitled to an increased quota on actual crop.

All tea permits have been issued in terms of a standard 500 pound mixture (T500) made up as follows :—

(T500)

Groundnut cake	430 lbs.
Saphos phosphate	60 ..
Muriate of potash	10 ..
	<u>500 lbs.</u>

giving Nitrogen 30 lbs., Phosphoric acid 17.7 lbs. and Potash 6 lbs.

Permits have also been issued for seed-bearer areas on the basis of 48 lbs. nitrogen, or 800 lbs. standard mixture, per acre.

- (ii) *Rubber*.—Strictly speaking rubber manure is not rationed in so much as estates receive the full amount of manure considered by the Rubber Research Scheme and the Consultative Committee to be necessary for full production. The basis of distribution is as follows :—

Mature Rubber (over 7 years).

—Allowance is made for the manuring annually of half the acreage of mature rubber at the rate of 400 lbs. per acre of the following standard mixture, (R400) or the equivalent in sulphate of ammonia if estates so prefer:

(R.400)

Ammonium sulphate	290 lbs.
Saphos phosphate	90 ..
Muriate of potash	20 ..
	<u>400 lbs.</u>

giving Nitrogen 59.74 lbs., Phosphoric acid 26.55 lbs. and Potash 12.0 lbs.

Young Rubber.—Provision is made for the manuring of the whole area on the basis of 215 lbs. per acre of standard mixture (R215) for half the acreage plus 100 lbs. per acre of Saphos phosphate on half the acreage.

(R215)

Ammonium sulphate	100 lbs.
Saphos phosphate	100 ..
Muriate of potash	15 ..
	<u>215 lbs.</u>

giving Nitrogen 20.6 lbs., Phosphoric acid 29.5 lbs. and Potash 9 lbs.

This ration is based on the assumption that the average age of the young rubber may be taken at 3½ years. Where such an age average is exceeded estates may claim an extra allowance. Cases of this sort and any other special applications are referred to the Director of the Rubber Research Scheme for scrutiny and I am much indebted to Mr. O'Brien for his assistance in such matters.

(iii) *Coconuts*.—Rationing does not apply, and no permits are required provided demands are restricted to normal requirements. In determining the basis of rationing for tea and rubber care was taken to see that adequate supplies of fertilisers were left available to meet the requirements of coconut estates.

(4) *Fertiliser Control Bureau*.—From the first it was realised that fertiliser distribution could only be successfully carried out by the adoption of standard mixtures and by the setting up of a central organisation in Colombo to serve as a clearing house for all permits, receive and distribute all orders between the individual Fertiliser Firms, and arrange for the regulated issues of manure in accordance with the quotas laid down for each distribution quarter by the Organiser, Fertiliser Rationing. The Fertiliser Firms readily agreed to the setting up of the above organisation, the Fertiliser Control Bureau, which has worked with great smoothness and enormously simplified the whole process of rationing and distribution.

A uniform price has been fixed for all the standard mixtures and estates have to agree to receive manure from any of the three firms concerned.

The thanks of the tea and rubber industries are due to the Fertiliser Firms for pooling their resources in this way and so making the scheme possible and in particular to the three gentlemen, Mr. A. Brown, Mr. T. K. Anderson and Mr. W. R. Thomson who have at different times been in charge of the Fertiliser Control Bureau and have done everything, possible and impossible, to promote the success of the scheme.

(5) *Distribution*.—The number of waggons available for fertiliser distribution by rail has been sufficient to deal with only a proportion of the tonnage to be transported. It was therefore necessary to arrange for certain districts to be served by lorry only. The division thus made may have appeared to some somewhat arbitrary; actually it was made only after very full discussion with the transport authorities, the principle being that waggons should be used for the longer haulages, and, in particular, that wear and tear of lorries and tyres and petrol consumption should be reduced as far as possible by restricting the use of lorries on the hilly roads up-country. In practice therefore distribution has been effected as follows:—

By C. G. R. Main Line.—Uva, Nuwara Eliya, Dimbula, Dickoya, Dolosbage-Kotmale and Pussellawa Districts, use of waggons being restricted to stations Gampola and above.

By C. G. R. K.V. Line.—Sabaragamuwa and certain estates in the K.V. District.

By Lorry Service.—All other areas.

In the case of the Main Line all-wagon allocations and dates of despatch.

are arranged by the Organiser, Fertiliser Rationing, schedules are then completed in the Fertiliser Control Bureau showing the tonnage to be distributed to individual estates by each train, and such schedules are issued to Station Organisers appointed by District Planters' Associations to act as controllers at each station to which fertilisers are despatched. The Station Organisers advise estates as to when manure will arrive, organise local lorry transport from rail-head to estate, ensure the rapid unloading of waggons and if possible arrange for return loads of tea or rubber.

Thanks to the willing and effective work of the Station Organisers the scheme has on the whole worked most smoothly and estates have regularly received their quotas in accordance with the delivery schedules.

K. V. Line.—This has been worked on the same principle but here waggon allocations are made by the local organiser, Mr. W. J. Craig of Pelmadulla Group, who originally organised fertiliser deliveries by this line, such allocations being made on the basis of the quarterly quota figures supplied by the Organiser, Fertiliser Rationing. I am greatly indebted to Mr. Craig for agreeing to continue this work.

Lorry Service.—Here again Organisers have been appointed by local Planters' Associations for each district. Quarterly quota schedules are supplied to them by the Organiser, Fertiliser Rationing, and distribution schedules are issued by the Fertiliser Control Bureau. Conditions vary somewhat in different areas but, in general, the District Organisers' main task is to organise and control the lorry service for the collection of manure from Colombo and its distribution to estates and to see that return loads are provided so that lorry capacity is not wasted. In the larger areas, particularly in those where many less organised estates and small-holdings participate in the scheme, the work of District Organisers is heavy and has been very much appreciated.

To offset to some extent the extra cost of lorry transport as compared with railway rates, a more concentrated manure mixture, T430, has been utilised in the case of tea for lorry served areas. This mixture of course supplies the same amount of plant food as the T500 mixture and the cost of such plant food is the same.

(6) *Statistics.*—The following statistics in regard to the scheme may be of interest, the data being complete up to the middle of February, the end of the first distribution quarter.

(i) *Permits.*—Number issued to 16th February is:—

	P. A. Members	Others	Total
Tea	767	237	1,004
Rubber	449	432	881
Total	1,216	669	1,885

Applications are still being received and the total number of permits for tea and rubber is likely to reach the 2,000 mark.

(ii) *Acreages for which permits have been issued:—*

Tea		430,654 acres
Rubber Mature	241,183 acres	
" Young	48,150	289,333 "
	Total	<u>719,987</u> "

(iii) *Tonnage to be transported (12 months):—*

Tea as T 500	55,200 tons by rail	
T 430	17,580 tons by lorry	72,780 tons
Rubber as R.400	18,935 tons	
Amm. Sulphate	1,671	"
R.215	2,198	"
Saphos	1,128	23,932 "
	Total	<u>96,712</u> "

Of the above total approximately 60,600 tons will be transported by rail and the balance by lorry.

(7) *Manure for Food Production.—*

The issue of fertiliser permits for food production areas has, unfortunately, been much delayed by the very uncertain stock position, particularly in regard to phosphoric acid, the available supplies of which were much reduced by the requirements of Government for paddy cultivation. Permits are however now being granted and it is hoped nothing will materialise to interfere with their issue.

(8) *Cost of Administration.—*A cess of 25 cents a ton on all manure delivered under the scheme is charged to estates by the suppliers and the proceeds credited to a central fund maintained by the Fertiliser Control Bureau. From this fund the cost of clerical assistance, stationery, printing, postage, etc., incurred in the St. Coombs Office and the expenses of District Organisers will be met together with certain expenditure incurred by the Fertiliser Control Bureau. Apart from the latter,

expenses to 31st December, 1942, amounted to about Rs 2,500 and monthly expenses, excluding the Fertiliser Control Bureau, are not likely in future to be more than about Rs. 850. The accounts will in due course be submitted to the Ceylon Estates Proprietary Association.

(9) *Acknowledgments.—*I have already acknowledged my indebtedness to those who have been associated with me in the working of the scheme. I must however also express my thanks to Agency Firms and Superintendents who have willingly supplied all data required and have accepted the scheme and the inconveniences arising therefrom with much patience and forbearance. The scheme has so far worked without the least friction in any quarter and has I trust been of service to the industries concerned.

ROLAND V. NORRIS,
Organiser, Fertiliser Rationing.