

SMALLHOLDINGS AND COCONUT REHABILITATION

(A Preliminary Report)

By M. L. M. SALGADO (*Acting Director*) and V. ABEYWARDENA (*Biometrician*)

Coconut Research Institute

The following is a preliminary report on the position of the subsidy scheme as in September 1956, in relation to smallholdings based on an analysis carried out by the Coconut Research Institute.

Detailed analysis of the data collected from the Department of Coconut Rehabilitation still incomplete. Further the statistics regarding the number and acreage of smallholdings under coconuts are not available to us yet.

The preliminary report furnished below is based on (reasonable) *estimates* of the extent of smallholdings under coconuts in various districts in Ceylon. For Chilaw District, however, fairly accurate data are available and moreover the data for Chilaw District with respect to 'Subsidy Applications' have been analysed in detail.

Therefore a general view of each district in the Island and a comparatively more detailed report for Chilaw District are given below.

TABLE I

District	Total acreage under coconut smallholdings (estimated)	APPLIED FOR SUBSIDY		Percentage of acreage using subsidy
		No. of holdings	Acreage	
All Ceylon	681,669	21,157	97,321	14.3
Colombo District	156,128	10,351	44,073	28.3
Kurunegala District	198,824	3,833	22,394	11.3
Chilaw District	47,399	2,837	16,319	34.4
Galle District	†31,591	—	†13,791	†43.7
Matara District	29,082	1,087	3,826	13.2
Kalutara District	34,702	616	2,832	8.2
Kalutara District	28,372	866	2,823	8.0
Puttalam District	28,549	210	1,952	6.8
Ratnapura District	17,091	550	1,792	10.5
Other Areas	58,816	202	1,363	2.3
Kegalle District	58,931	290	1,186	2.0
Kandy District	13,934	225	1,053	7.6
Batticaloa District	9,841	90	776	7.9

†These figures are relatively accurate.

Table I gives the estimated acreage of smallholdings under coconuts for each district. It gives actual data for the total acreage for which subsidies have been granted, and also the proportion of the total estimated acreage of smallholdings which will be manured.

It should be noted that the estimated total acreage is on the higher side, in that it includes home-gardens also. As such the percentages worked out will be on the lower side. This factor would not make an appreciable difference because subsidy applications have been made for these home-gardens also (i.e. less than one acre).

It is observed that only about 15 per cent of the total acreage of smallholdings in Ceylon have responded to this scheme. Chilaw District records the highest response (43.7 per cent) and second comes Colombo District (28.3 per cent). The other districts have recorded a poor response.

In total acreage covered by subsidies, the order of precedence is Colombo District, then Kurunegala District, and Chilaw District third.

For Chilaw District, this response was expected, with the Coconut Research Institute and its propaganda work in full swing, besides the traditions of good husbandry for which the District is well-known.

Colombo District recording the relatively high demand, can also be attributed to the above factor as well as the higher level of literacy in this district, and also probably the switching over of income from paddy lands owned by coconut smallholders.

Chilaw District

Reasonably accurate statistics are available for Chilaw District. The detailed analysis of subsidy records is complete for this district and moreover the statistics of smallholdings under coconut in this district are relatively accurate.

Table II below gives for Chilaw District and its sub-divisions, statistics of (1) the total number of smallholdings (under coconut), their acreage, and also the average size of holdings in the different zones, (2) the number of holdings that have been granted subsidies, their total acreage and the average size of holding, and (3) the proportion of holdings and of acreage which have responded to the subsidy scheme.

TABLE II

Area	TOTAL HOLDINGS			APPLIED FOR SUBSIDY			% USING SUBSIDY	
	No.	Acreage	Size of holdings	No.	Acreage	Size of holdings	No.	Acreage
CHILAW DISTRICT ..	10,964	31,591	2.88	2,837	13,791	4.73	25.9	43.7
(a)								
P.K. South ..	7,175	19,037	2.65	2,351	10,111	4.16	32.8	53.1
Otara Palata ..	2,349	6,937	2.95	878	3,971	4.52	37.4	57.2
Kammal Pattu ..	1,623	3,494	2.15	511	1,691	3.31	31.5	48.4
Meda Palata ..	1,641	4,506	2.75	486	2,585	5.32	29.6	57.4
Yatakalam Pattu ..	1,562	4,100	2.62	476	1,864	3.36	30.5	45.5
(b)								
P.K. North ..	3,789	12,554	3.31	486	3,680	7.54	12.8	29.3
Yagam Pattu ..	1,329	4,365	3.28	208	1,447	6.96	15.7	33.1
Munneswaram Pattu (south) ..	1,046	3,490	3.34	171	1,352	7.82	16.5	38.7
Munneswaram Pattu (north) ..	228	522	2.29	13	115	8.85	5.7	22.0
Anavillundan Pattu ..	1,186	4,177	3.52	94	766	8.15	7.9	18.3

It will be observed that for this district a total of 2,837 out of 10,964 holdings (i.e. 25.9 per cent) have applied for subsidy. On the basis of acreage this amounts to 13,791 acres out of 31,591 (i.e. 43.7 per cent)—a very considerable response. This shows that the response has been better in the case of big smallholders.

Pitigal Korale South has covered 32.8 per cent from the point of view of the number of holdings and 53.1 per cent from the point of view of acreage; it may be no coincidence that C.R.I. is situated in P.K. South and that traditions of efficient cultivation and manuring may have permeated from the proximate influence of the Coconut Research Institute.

As against this, Pitigal Korale North has covered only 12.8 per cent of the number of holdings and 29.3 per cent of the acreage.

The situation with regard to the other sub-divisions of these Korales are clear from Table II

TABLE III
Applications for subsidy by size of smallholdings in Chilaw District

	No. of holdings of size (acres)					Total	Proportion %				
	<2½	<5	<10	<15	<20		<2½	<5	<10	<15	<20
CHILAW DISTRICT	1,266	593	577	234	167	2,837	44.6	20.9	20.3	8.3	5.0
(a)											
P.K. South	1,148	491	453	155	104	2,351	48.8	20.9	19.3	6.6	4.5
Otara Palata	410	174	196	63	35	878	46.7	19.8	22.3	7.2	4.0
Kammal Pattu	303	107	73	21	7	511	59.3	20.9	14.3	4.1	1.7
Meda Palata	200	102	98	45	41	486	41.2	20.9	20.2	9.3	8.4
Yatakalana Pattu	235	108	86	26	21	476	49.3	22.7	18.1	5.5	4.4
(b)											
P.K. North	118	102	124	79	63	486	24.3	21.0	25.5	16.2	13.0
Yagam Pattu	64	43	48	31	22	208	30.7	20.7	23.1	14.9	10.6
Munneswaram South	36	41	38	36	20	171	21.1	24.0	22.2	21.1	11.6
Munneswaram North	4	1	2	3	3	13	30.7	7.7	15.4	23.1	23.1
Anavillundan Pattu	14	17	36	9	18	94	14.8	18.1	38.3	9.6	19.2

Table III shows the distribution of the applicants for subsidy by size of smallholdings in Chilaw District.

It is observed that nearly half (44.6 per cent) of the applications came from smallholding of less than 2½ acres. The position in the main divisions and sub-divisions of the district are seen clearly in the Table. A noteworthy point is that in Pitigal Korale South (as compared with Pitigal Korale North) a relatively higher proportion of the applications for subsidy were from the smaller smallholder (48.8 per cent against 24.3 per cent).

In general it appears that the response to the subsidy scheme, follows the literacy pattern and/or the proximity of the area to the Coconut Research Institute—Otara Palata recording the highest response and Munneswaram Pattu North and Anavillundan Pattu the lowest.

This stresses the importance of education and propaganda in the success of this subsidy scheme.

A full report with regard to all the other districts in the Island will follow in due course and on the basis of this report the actual disposition and posting of Advisory Field Officer

Coconut Instructors) should be determined, the principle being that the response to subsidy should be inversely proportional to the future posting of Advisory Field Officers. On principle there should be greater intensification of Advisory Work where the response has been low on the basis that in areas where applications have been liberally made, much inducement is not necessary in contrast to areas, where (a) advice, (b) special pleadings and (c) the organization of Co-operative Societies where loans can be arranged to meet the cost of the balance that has to be paid to the manure firms by the smallholdings.

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