ON THE USE OF COIR DUST IN MANURE MIXTURES.

By

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Some time ago a suggestion was made at a meeting of the Estate and Experimental Sub-Committee of the Tea Research Institute (by Mr. G. K. Newton) that coir dust might be useful as a means of increasing the bulk of inorganic manure mixtures.

Such an increase in bulk would facilitate the distribution of the relatively small doses of fertilisers which it is sometimes desired to apply. It was found that the addition of some 10% by weight of coir dust to an inorganic manure mixture caused a doubling of the bulk of the mixture.

Accordingly, to a mixture of sulphate of ammonia, saphos phosphate and muriate of potash, was added 10% by weight of coir dust. The mixture was forwarded by rail and road to St. Coombs in the normal way.

On arrival the bags were laid flat and samples for analysis were withdrawn from various parts of each bag through slits cut in the fabric. The slits were then closed and the bags were stored upright for 3 months. Further samples were then withdrawn and analysed.

The results showed that the inorganic manure was evenly distributed throughout the mixture and that there was no tendency for the inorganic components to separate during transit and storage.

The physical condition of the mixture was excellent and remained so after storage for 3 months.

The Superintendent reported that the mixture handled very well and that the additional bulk facilitated distribution in the field. He also commented on the fact that it was easier to see where the manure had been applied and hence supervision of distribution may also be assisted.

Against these advantages must be placed the additional cost of bags for the more bulky mixture and increased transport charges. Coir dust itself has virtually no manurial value but it is cheap and available.

It is considered that it may prove useful as a means of increasing the bulk of inorganic manure mixtures in cases where it is necessary to apply small amounts (up to 2 cwt. per acre) of inorganic manure.

We are indebted to Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co., Ltd. for preparing the mixture for us.