

EDITORIAL

TEA IN EAST AFRICA

Two articles by Dr Kirtisinghe, published in this issue describe cultural practices, manufacturing techniques and the marketing of tea in Kenya and Uganda. These countries have recently emerged as keen competitors with mid-grown and certain high-grown Ceylon teas in the London Market. The author points out several items of interest to Ceylon producers, of which perhaps the most significant, and possibly the most relevant to Ceylon is that small holders can be extremely efficient tea producers provided they are allowed to develop their properties with strict supervision from a central authority, whose powers are defined by law.

Only a small number of estates in Ceylon yield less than 1000 lb made tea per acre per annum. Yet, the country's average production per acre is only about 850 lb. On the other hand, rarely does a small-holding produce more than 1000 lb per acre. The yield of the majority of small holdings in Ceylon is between 150 and 600 lb per acre. It is, therefore, clear that Ceylon small holders are not efficient tea producers. In East Africa, however, small holdings often do better yield-wise than large estates. The scheme of tea cultivation adopted by the Kenya Tea Development Authority is an obvious success. It may be well worthwhile for Ceylon to investigate whether similar schemes could be implemented in this Country, or in the alternative, to devise a scheme to utilize areas which have poor stands of tea for other purposes. This would benefit the small holder considerably, and boost the demand for tea in an already overburdened market, particularly for mid-country and low-country teas. It would also make available much good land for highland food production which the country desperately requires.

Nematode control in nurseries

Infestation of nurseries with the root lesion eelworm *Pratylenchus loosi* has resulted in many new clearings getting off to a very bad start. Transporting rooted cuttings from one estate to another is prohibited by law and the Institute strongly urges all estates to co-operate in restricting the spread of this pest by refraining from transporting rooted cuttings. The article by Dr Kerr and Mr Vythilingam gives in detail the factors to be borne in mind when nursery fumigation is carried out. We wish to emphasize that fumigating only the bag soil is quite unsatisfactory, and that nurseries must be fumigated in their entirety each year before cuttings are put out. The provisional recommendations issued for the fumigation of nurseries with methyl bromide (*The Tea Quarterly*, Volume 37, Part 3, September, 1965, page 162) are now confirmed and are no longer provisional.

Extraction of nematodes from soil

The technical article by Dr Sivapalan describes a modification of the current technique for extracting *Pratylenchus loosi* from soil. This modification ensures greater accuracy in the estimation of nematodes in soil and should prove of immense value in experimental, as well as routine extraction for determining nematode numbers in soils.

An anti-oxidant in tea

Further information has been obtained by the authors of this paper about the development and preservation of flavour in made tea. It will not be long before the results of this work will be reflected in practical benefits.

Advance information on research projects

The purpose of this section is to encourage planters to carry out experiments and publicize their findings, so that progressive planters who may like to try out experiments which have given useful results elsewhere, could do so under their own conditions. Observations which are not substantiated with experimental evidence would not normally, be considered for publication. We invite planters to send in reports of their experiments to be included in this section. Whilst encouraging planters to try out new ideas, it must be clearly understood that the Institute will neither be responsible for their failures nor endorse successful trials until they have been more formally investigated.

Resistance of clones to nematodes

The article by Dr Kerr and Mr Vythilingam presents evidence, subject to confirmation, about the resistance and susceptibility of clones to damage by the root lesion eelworm, *Pratylenchus loosi*.