

# PROPOSED F.A.O. COCONUT SURVEY 1960/61

## Introduction

A pilot survey, of an experimental character, is to be undertaken immediately in three Revenue Districts — Colombo, Kurunegala and Chilaw, which together account for over 60 per cent of the area under coconut as disclosed at the Census of 1946. The compactness of the area would facilitate the handling of the field work. A study of the progress and results achieved in this pilot undertaking will enable a full-scale survey covering the whole of Ceylon to be launched in or after 1962.

## Background Information

Present estimates of coconut area are based on the results of the 1946 Census. As the Census of Agriculture 1952, covered only estates — i.e. holdings/plots of 20 acres and over — the sampling scheme for the survey will have to depend on the Census of 1946.

## Sampling Scheme

100 to 120 villages will be selected in the three Districts together, the number in each District will be proportional to the area under coconut, reported in 1946. The field work in each village will be undertaken in three stages as follows:—

- Stage I All plots of land within the boundaries of each village will be listed together with other particulars such as name of land, name of owner/operator, area of plot, area under coconut, etc.
- Stage II In ten selected plots, under coconuts, within each village, details of area (by measurement when necessary), number of coconut palms, age of palms, bearing status, cultivation practices, etc. will be recorded.
- Stage III (a) Two clusters of four palms each will be demarcated in each of three selected plots per village and details of number of nuts harvested recorded every two months throughout a twelve month period.
- (b) In a sub-sample of a few palms per village, the harvested nuts will be removed to a central station where, after a period of three to four weeks, weights of the husked nuts will be recorded in order to determine outturn.

### Staff

(a) Field Operations — 20 to 25 officers, stationed within the three districts will be required if the field work is to be completed within a reasonable time. Recruitment of 'ad hoc' staff may not be satisfactory and it is therefore urged that the services of a sufficient number of Advisory Officers of the Coconut Research Institute, Field Inspectors of the Department of Coconut Rehabilitation and Statistical Investigators, in the ranges covering the three Districts be made available.

On the basis of 5 to 6 villages per field officer, Stage I, of the survey may be completed within 50 to 60 days and, Stage II, in a further 20 to 30 days provided these officers could undertake full time work on the survey. Stage III of the field work will provide work of a recurring nature involving bi-monthly visits to the selected plots, in each village, on the date fixed for plucking in order to determine by an actual count the number of nuts harvested from each of the selected palms. This stage of operation will continue for one year.

### Supervisory Staff, etc.

The survey will be conducted under the guidance of the F.A.O. Regional Coconut Statistician, who will have an Officer from the Department of Census and Statistics as his national counterpart in Ceylon.

As the field work in the three Districts needs effective supervision it will be advantageous to have a few Officers available for this purpose.