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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Tea in North-East and South India

In this issue of the *Tea Quarterly* a feature of interest to which the attention of our readers may be drawn is an account of a visit to the tea areas of North East and South India by the Technologist and Vegetative Propagation Officer of the Institute. Their report pinpoints certain aspects of tea cultivation and manufacture which are of particular applicability under local conditions. Following on the report on tea cultivation in the U.S.S.R. published in the last issue of the Journal, this review should serve to widen our knowledge of the various aspects of the cultivation of the crop in other parts of the world and furnish new ideas, some of which planters might try out for themselves to ascertain whether they are advantageous or feasible under their conditions.

Manuring of Tea

Of the technical articles, reference should particularly be made to the note by Dr. S. C. Pearce summarising his findings on the manurial experiments which have been carried out at St. Coombs and the other substations, in some cases over a period of several years. Dr. Pearce is the Head of the Statistics Division of the East Malling Research Station and recently came out to St. Coombs for a short period to undertake the statistical examination of the data of these experiments and to advise us on the future policy in regard to them and on field experiments in general. We acknowledge our indebtedness to him for the valuable contribution he has made on this aspect of the Institute's activities and thank the Director of the East Malling Research Station Dr. F. R. Tubbs, who is also our Scientific Adviser in the U.K., for having made available Dr. Pearce's services for this purpose.

In this connection, attention may be drawn to the report of the Agricultural Chemist in the T.R.I. Annual Report for 1958, which outlines certain trends shown by these experiments.

Pectic Substances in Tea

The paper by Mr. Ramaswamy on the pectic substances in tea throws some light on the possible relationship between this group of substances and the quality of tea. This work is, however, of a somewhat preliminary nature and further experimentation is needed to confirm the observations which he has reported.

The Control of Parasitic Eelworms in Tea

The comprehensive review by Dr. T. Visser on the prevalence and control of the parasitic eelworms in tea, marks a further advance in our knowledge of this important "pest" of tea. His paper is a fitting finale to the useful investigational work he has directed during his period as Acting Nematologist.

With the appointment of a full-time Nematologist in the person of Dr. M. T. Hutchinson, formerly of the Rutgers University, U.S.A., whose services have been made available to us through the good offices of the United States Operations Mission in the Island, work on the control of eelworms should continue to make rapid progress.

Lygus Bug

Notes on the *Lygus* bug by Mr. D. Calnaido should prove of interest to up-country planters in view of its fairly wide prevalence at higher elevations. Sporadic outbreaks appear to have occurred in 1956/57. The description of the pest and its life history, its habits and damage caused, and host plants are detailed in the article and methods of control suggested. Further work on the latter aspect would appear to be indicated.

Review of Tea Diseases

Readers interested in the history of tea diseases and their control in Ceylon would find the review by Dr. Mulder stimulating. It is apparent that there have been marked advances made with the study and control of certain important diseases, *e.g.* blister blight, in regard to which there has been continuity of effort and action. Other diseases such as *Phloem necrosis* have, no doubt for good reasons, not had a similar advantage.

Guatemala Grass and Soil Rehabilitation

The note by Mr. Tolhurst on the beneficial effect of Guatemala grass roots on soil rehabilitation offers confirmatory evidence of the work done by his predecessor, Dr. F. Haworth, in 1952*. It is noteworthy that Dr. Haworth's figure for the dry weight of roots in the first six inches of top soil is about the same, on the average, as is found by Mr. Tolhurst. Dr. Haworth further found that the roots went down to a depth of about 10 feet and contributed as much as 19 tons per acre of dry matter. Other grasses apparently have a similar beneficial effect on the top soil. In the light of these facts, the decision recently made by the Tea Subsidy Advisory Board to require that every old tea land which is to be replanted in future under the Tea Replanting Subsidy Scheme should be reconditioned for a minimum period of one year by planting out Guatemala grass, is indeed to be commended.

General

Our readers will also be interested in two notes, one by Mr. K. V. S. Krishna of Katary Estate, South India, on the effect of the application of plant-growth substances on clonal cuttings, and the other by Mr. B. Warusavitarne of Gallinda Estate, Talgaswela, on the successful adoption of a 3-year pruning cycle under conditions obtaining in the Galle District. Mr. Krishna's experiences are in accord with ours in respect of the effect of plant hormone solutions on naturally poor and good-rooting clones. Mr. Warusavitarne's trial confirms our findings at Ingiriya where a 3-year cycle was found to give next best results to the 18-month cycle. We welcome notes of this nature from practical planters.

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*Observations on the Root System of Guatemala Grass on an Upland Tea Soil in Ceylon—F. Haworth; Trop. Agr., Vol. XXX, Nos. 4-6, April/June '53.