

SUBSIDY SCHEME FOR PLANTING COCONUT ON CITRONELLA LANDS — PART II

By C. A. WICKRAMASURIYA

Chief Advisory Officer, Coconut Research Institute.

In a previous issue of this journal mention has been made of the object of the Scheme.* The functions of the Coconut Rehabilitation Department and that of the Coconut Research Institute, with respect to the administration of the scheme, have also been indicated in the same article. This article is an interim report on the work that has been carried out and the progress that has been made, since the implementation of the Scheme in 1960.

The planting material required for the Scheme is produced by the Coconut Research Institute's Planting Division at two nurseries situated at Kamburupitiya (Mapalana Farm) and Weeraketiya. The Coconut Rehabilitation Department supplies the fertilizer and attends to the payment of cash subsidy direct to the applicants. The Advisory Division of the Coconut Research Institute is responsible for all other work connected with the scheme. This work involves such items as allocation and distribution of seedlings, fertilizer and insecticide for termite control, advice and demonstrations on the correct method of lining and planting, follow-up service, pest and disease control and inspection of plantations prior to the payment of the annual cash subsidy.

To facilitate easy working and for the convenience of the applicants, Matara and Hambantota Districts have been divided into five ranges. These ranges have been named Hakmana, Walasmulla, Kirama, Katuwana and Vitharandeniya. In each of these ranges an advisory field officer and depending on the extent of the area, two or three field attendants have been stationed. Their duties involve mainly in giving advice and demonstrations on lining, planting, manuring, soil conservation and control of pests and diseases. Besides the above, the field staff have distributed seedlings and fertilizer to applicants at central points, during the issue seasons in May/June and October/November each year beginning from 1960.

After each season of issue, advisory field officers have been sent out to inspect the planted lands and recommend payment of the first annual cash subsidy. Thereafter, the annual payment is paid on a

*The Ceylon Coconut Planters' Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, pages 3-4.

declaration made by the applicants as to the number of seedlings maintained on the land. These declarations are however test checked before payment is recommended. When inspections of the plantations are being carried out the field officers advise owners of land on the after-care of seedlings.

The citronella areas that have been included under the scheme show wide variations in soil and rainfall conditions. Adequate rainfall, soil moisture and proper soil conditions are no doubt important factors for the establishment of coconut in any area. In this respect the four D.R.O.'s Divisions in the Matara District can broadly be classified as different from those of the Hambantota District. In Hambantota District the prevailing conditions appear to be less satisfactory than those in the Matara District. As regards the individual allotments, a majority of them are situated inland, most of which are located in steep or hilly situations. These are usually accessible only by foot and often involve cross-country walking over hills and paddy fields.

It has to be mentioned that, despite these difficulties, the field staff have carried out a noteworthy strenuous job of work in executing their duties. It is hoped that the owners of lands too will put in their best efforts, by utilizing the advice and assistance given them, and bring up their plantations to reasonable standards of production. In certain areas however, where conditions do not appear to be satisfactory, small-holders cannot be expected to adopt costly radical agronomic improvements on their lands, in the hope of sustaining coconut.

A summarised statement of the issues that have so far been made under the scheme is given below.

(A)	Applications received in 1959	5,889
	Applications received in 1961	6,438
	Total No. of applications received	<u>12,327</u>

(B) ISSUES

Year and Season	No. of Applicants	Acreage Issued			Seedlings Issued	Fertilizer Issued			Aldrex Issued
		A.	R.	P.		T.	cwt.	lbs.	
1960 M/J	1,954	1,864	02	28½	139,713	46	12	56	Issued in 1961
1960 O/N	1,968	3,295	01	12½	247,232	82	10	14	" " 1961
1961 M/J	822	2,522	02	10½	189,237	63	01	98	36,859½ ozs.
1961 O/N	562	3,549	01	08	266,276	88	15	00	21,372 "
1962 M/J	2,208	2,090	01	01½	156,596	52	04	70	12,535½ "
1962 O/N	2,500	3,700	approx.		280,832	93	14	00	22,488 "
Grand Total	10,012	17,022	00	31½	1,279,886	426	18	14	93,255