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REVIEWS IN BRIEF

Soil Fertility in India, R. R. Agarwal, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965. Pp. xii + 278. Rs. 16.00.

This text-book composed of 10 chapters, deals with the problem of soil fertility with particular reference to Indian conditions. It describes how soil fertility can be preserved or improved by a study of the inorganic plant nutrients in the soil, its organic matter content and the micro-biological status. The author has critically examined a large volume of scientific evidence from field experiments on soils and fertilizers, to provide examples in support of the principles dealt with or conclusions drawn in the various chapters. It is estimated that the cultivated crops in India remove annually on an average 3 million tons of nitrogen, 1.5 million tons of phosphorus oxide and 3.5 million tons of potash. The plant food returned to the soil through organic sources are hardly 1.8 million tons of nitrogen, 0.60 million tons of phosphorus oxide and 1.8 million tons of potash, leaving a large gap between nutrients removed and those added. Efforts therefore need to be made to increase both the production and use of all sources of organic manure to help improve soil fertility. It is recognized that this source alone will not be enough to bridge the gap. Chemical fertilizers in large quantities need to be used to improve the fertility level quickly. The position in this respect is however none too satisfactory. Although fertilizer use has made rapid progress during the last ten years—from 65,685 tonnes in 1952-53 to 5,55,337 tonnes in 1962-63 (in terms of total plant nutrients)—, it is still far too below the actual requirements of about 1.6 million tons in terms of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash at the end of the Third Plan period. Evidently, much more ground has to be covered for reaching the targeted consumption of fertilizers. The student of agricultural economics will find the last two chapters on “Commercial Fertilizers in Soil Fertility” and “Permanent and Long-term (Fertilizer) Experiments in India” particularly instructive. The book will prove useful to students, research workers, farmers, extension workers and planners alike.

Farming and Food Supplies, Margaret Bramley, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1965. Pp. 131. 20s.

In this small book, Mrs. Bramley examines the case for the expansion of British agriculture, which is built upon three premises, namely, that (1) the farming industry in Britain is at present making an indispensable contribution to the national economy; (2) the industry is capable of further development in productivity per acre and per man and efficiency; and (3) there is likely to be a scarcity of food on the world markets over the next 20-30 years which imposes some responsibility on Britain for helping to raise food supplies. Out of a total of about 60 million acres of land in the United Kingdom, 48 million acres or around 80 per cent are devoted to crop and grass land farming and rough grazing. British agriculture produces two-thirds of its temperate foodstuffs. The average size of farms in England and Wales is 70 acres. Farming provides employment to a million farmers and farm workers, which constitutes 4 per cent of British labour force. There is wide inequality between farmers themselves inasmuch as a minority of farmers, about 6 per cent of the total earn more than £ 3,000 per year. At the other extreme, 60 per cent of them earn less than £ 1,000 a year, two-thirds of this

group earning less than £600 a year. British agriculture is becoming capital intensive. The gross output of British farming is about £ 1,800 million per annum. Between 1956-61, the farming industry increased its output by 3.3 per cent per annum. During the same period, productivity of labour engaged in farming (output per man year) increased by over 5 per cent per annum and between 1961-66, it is expected to increase by 6.1 per cent per annum. The expansion of farming over the last 25 years has brought about a substantial import saving to the extent of about £ 300-400 million per annum, equivalent to about 10 per cent of the import bill. About 35 per cent of expenditure on the average is on food. The average intake of calories per head per day has risen from 3,000 pre-war to 3,150 in 1960, an increase of 3 per cent. Though the quality of diet has improved greatly, there are still submerged groups in the population, particularly among children who do not have an adequate diet on account of poverty.

Government support to agriculture in the form of production grants, price guarantees and deficiency payment schemes along with the provision of assured markets for certain agricultural products has enabled Britain to build a stable and efficient agricultural industry and thereby to contribute to the growth of the national economy.

The author stresses that the possibility of a world food shortage should arouse serious concern in Britain. By the end of the century it is expected that population in England and Wales would increase by 18-20 millions or 37 per cent and food supplies need to be increased by 30-40 per cent. The ingredients of a policy for agriculture are suggested to include the following: (1) utilization of land resources with utmost care and putting an end to the reckless seizure of fertile farm land for non-agricultural purposes, (2) balanced area development, (3) better use of hill land and rough grazings, (4) co-ordination of land use planning with the planning of water resources, (5) provision of suitable incentives to the skilled farming labour force to stay in farming, (6) modernization of farms, (7) reorganized marketing systems and more extensive credit facilities with a view to providing a fair measure of security on prices and incomes. These policy measures would give farmers both the confidence and the incentive to stay in business and help to raise productivity.

Mrs. Bramley has projected the case for expansion of British agriculture by carefully sifting the facts. This book is a valuable addition to the growing volume of literature on British agriculture.

Resource Book for Rural Universities in the Developing Countries, H. W. Hannah, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois, U.S.A., 1966. Pp. xiii+375. \$8.50.

The three main objectives of this book which deals with universities and agricultural educational institutions in developing countries are : (1) to express those underlying assumptions and principles that give the land-grant institutions their vitality; (2) to explain and discuss the general structure which seems to have best promoted these underlying assumptions and principles; (3) to provide a reservoir of detailed and factual information about the internal organization and functioning of such a university. The book consists of 26 chapters. It first discusses the role of agricultural education in economic development, the purposes of the new universities and the need for them, and the necessity for a new philosophy and new look in existing colleges and universities. It contains a wealth of detailed infor-

mation about the structure, policies and procedures for setting up and operating both the academic and administrative areas in an agricultural university. The last chapter provides an insight into the existing agricultural universities in Africa, Asia and South America and also a list of suggested ways in which these universities may be improved. The appendices contain a glossary, select references, a digest of university acts and statutes, suggestions for university statutes and a detailed index. This book will prove useful to administrators and educationists as a source of valuable information.

Agricultural Policy in India, Sharad Chandra Jain, Allied Publishers Private Ltd., Bombay, 1965. Pp. x + 219. Rs. 16.50.

This book attempts to describe the various measures taken by the Government to bring about agricultural development and examines their suitability and effectiveness to achieve the ultimate objectives of agricultural policy, which are stated to be production efficiency, income security, economic stability and improvement of social welfare. The book is divided into three parts: Part I entitled the "Agricultural Setting in the Country" analyses the trends in agricultural output, basic causes of low productivity and the low level of agricultural income. Part II analyses the objectives of policy for agriculture, examines the progress of land reform measures introduced in the various States and deals with the pattern of agrarian economy. The basic conditions for prosperous agriculture are dealt with in Part III. These include improvement of the co-operative marketing organization, price support, extended credit facilities, crop and livestock insurance, organization for agricultural extension and modernization of agriculture through complete mechanization in a phased manner.

Agricultural Development of African Nations, Volume I, S.C. Jain, Vora & Co. Publishers Private Ltd., Bombay, 1965. Pp. vii + 256. Rs. 20.00.

First in the series, this book describes the various aspects of agricultural development of 17 African nations, namely, Algeria, The Congo Republic, the United Arab Republic, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Malagasy, Mali Republic, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda-Burundi, Sudan, Tanganyika, Uganda and Upper Volta. With the exception of Rwanda and Burundi, the agricultural development in each African nation is discussed in a separate chapter. The subject-matter of each chapter is broadly divided as follows: economic characteristics of agriculture, geographical influences on agriculture, social and technological factors contributing to the production pattern, agricultural and livestock production, trade in agricultural commodities, domestic food consumption, government measures for agricultural reform and rapid advancement of agriculture, possibilities of increasing agricultural production and general appraisal and outlook. The last chapter examines certain problems of agricultural structure and their solutions and contains suggestions for the rapid economic growth in these countries.

Factors Affecting Fertilizer Consumption—Problems and Policies, National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi, 1964. Pp. xiv + 104. Rs. 7.50.

This study which was sponsored by the Fertilizer Association of India, is based on the findings of a sample survey. It makes an attempt to probe into the

problem of fertilizer consumption in India in the context of its importance for increasing food production, the development of the agricultural sector, and the whole process of economic development. It was designed to bring out the factors that affect fertilizer consumption and to suggest ways of encouraging their consumption.

The method used was to compare the working of the relevant factors in two contrasting sets of areas—one in which fertilizer consumption was the highest and the other where it was relatively low. The first set consisted of the seven districts in which the Intensive Agricultural District Programme (Package Programme) was originally introduced in 1961. Control constituted of a set of seven districts which had the largest gap between actual and potential fertilizer use. In all, 840 farmers selected from 70 villages in 28 blocks in the two sets of areas were interviewed. The important factors influencing fertilizer consumption as revealed by the study are the prices of fertilizers, organization of distribution and marketing, arrangements for credit facilities and farmers' attitudes towards the use of fertilizers.

The following are the main findings of the study. Availability of much larger quantities of short term credit and more sale-points in the villages are the two factors that favoured the package programme areas as compared with the non-package. Some of the important recommendations of this study are : (1) extension of a specific fertilizer loan in kind; (2) providing for flexible recovery procedures and recovery of the fertilizer credit, given in kind, through the procurement agency in areas where there are programmes of foodgrains procurement; (3) development of other sources of fertilizer credit by encouraging commercial banks to participate in the financing of agricultural operation through other institutions nearer to the farmers and by encouraging private enterprise to extend credit facilities to fertilizer trade; (4) grant of subsidies to reduce the fertilizer price payable by the farmers; (5) besides expanding the role of rural co-operatives, development of a really competitive sales system by permitting private dealers to participate in fertilizer trade of all types and setting up of manufacturers' sales organizations; (6) improvement of the marketing system through (i) expansion of sales-points in the villages, (ii) expansion of warehousing facilities and (iii) introduction of a smaller bag of 25 kgs; (7) improvement and expansion of the extension service programme; (8) setting up of an independent organization to promote the use of fertilizers; and (9) speedy implementation of land reforms by the State Governments with a view to providing security of tenure and ownership rights to tenants, which would in turn encourage farmers to use more fertilizer inputs.

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