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ECONOMIC ASPECTS

MICRO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF PEANUT PRODUCTION IN SURINAME IN RELATION TO IMPORT – SUBSTITUTION

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INTRODUCTION

In Suriname peanut is grown as a regular crop: small plots of 0.04–0.20 ha are planted 2 (sometimes 3 times) a year on the sandy ridges of the coastal plain.

Main production areas are the Saramacca district and the Commewijne district. Total acreage planted amounted 242 ha in 1976 with a production of 290 tons dry pulses. Production is used for preparing salted and unsalted peanuts and peanut-sauce: a small part is manufactured into peanut-butter. As local production still does not meet national demand an amount of 446 tons of shelled peanuts are imported mainly for the peanut-factories (in 1977).

PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES AND PRODUCTION COSTS

Although the planted plots are of a small acreage the used practices show a shifting from the traditional system where all operations (were done by hand and simple implements) to a lightly mechanized system.

Seed-bed preparation of the greater part of the acreage is done by 2-wheel tractors.

All further field operations such as seeding, ridging, weeding and pulling are done by hand and simple implement: sun-drying is generally practiced. Recent experiments on weedcontrol by spraying with herbicides has shown to be succesful.

Efforts are undertaken by extension to get peanut-farmers acquainted with this new system of weed control thus enabling a further decrease of total labor costs in peanut growing.

Still the lack of harvesting equipment adjusted to their conditions is felt as the main constraint for further accres of acreage by most farmers.

Field trails in the interior has up to now showed the possibility of achieving higher yields on the Coebiti-soils. A project for the further research of peanut-growing on these soils is being carried out for the present.

Production costs for the completely hand-operated cropping system are calculated to amount Sf. 3.275,-/ha resulting in a cost-price of Sf 2,25 per kg dry pulses.

A cropping system with mechanized seedbed preparation, fertilizing chemical weed-control would enable a reduction of this figure to Sf. 1,75 per kg dry pulses.

COST OF PRODUCTION IN RELATION TO IMPORT SUBSTITUTION

Import prices for whole, graded peanut-kernels amount Sf. 2,25 (including 42% import taxes) with production prices of Sf. 1,70 for dry pulses that is a cost price for whole graded kernels of app-Sf. 2,85 per kg*, it is not likely that import-substitution will have a chance unless special measures are taken.

* hereby it is assumed that the costs of shelling, greading, bagging and transport are made up by the proceeds of broken kernels.

PEANUT PRODUCTION THROUGH PROJECT–DEVELOPMENT

Generally speaking the problems concerning an increase of local peanut production are believed to be of less complex nature than those for maize. Small farmers are eager to increase their plots if the necessary machines are available. Their special interest is focussed on machinery for seedbed preparation, pulling and stripping.

As in the case of maize a special role should be played by nuclear farms in the main production areas providing these equipment to surrounding farmers, preferably in an outgrower setting. As a result of the expected decrease of farmers acreage provisions should be made for artificial drying of peanuts.

Contrary to maize, it is also believed that total import substitution can be achieved without large-scale farms; small-and eventually middle-scale peanut production in the coastal plain might prove to be the solution.

Table 1. Regional division of peanut acreage and production* (1973/1977)

Districts		1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Commewijne	(ha)	117.4	139.4	131.3	124.2	73.6
	(ton)	109.0	122.7	121.9	77.7	51.4
Coronie	(ha)	5.1	8.9	0.3	8.9	1.4
	(ton)	6.6	10.5	0.8	10.5	2.3
Marowijne	(ha)	11.9	—	7.5	3.4	10.1
	(ton)	12.0	—	7.4	2.2	9.7
Suriname	(ha)	12.8	20.8	24.8	7.9	14.2
	(ton)	12.5	13.3	10.9	3.7	10.6
Saramacca	(ha)	137.9	148.4	161.7	96.5	—
	(ton)	107.0	104.0	113.3	50.4	—
Para	(ha)		0.6			
	(ton)		0.5			
Totaal	(ha)	285.1	318.1	325.6	241.4	99.3
	(ton)	344	382	391	290	338

* dried pulses

Source: Ministry of Agriculture
Agro-Economic Division

Peanut – Pests, diseases and weeds

Table 2. Imports of peanuts (kernels)

1975	331 tons	value	Sf.	662,000
1976	427 tons			965,000
1977	446 tons			1,248,000
US\$ 1.00 = Sf. 1.77				

Source: Min of Agriculture
Agro – Economics Division

Table 3. Production costs traditional system

seedbed preparation	43 mandays		
planting and plant replacement	31 "		
weeding and ridging	32 "		
pulling	24 "		
stripping	55 "		
total labor for	185 mandays	= Sf.	2,775,-
seed			560,-
tools and bags			15,-
total production costs		Sf.	3,350,-

Total yield: 1500 kg dried pulses

Source Min. Agriculture
Agro – Economics Division

Table 4.

	Labor costs	machinery	materials	total costs
seedbed preparation		Sf. 375,-		Sf. 375,-
planting and plant replacement	Sf. 465			Sf. 465,-
weedcontrol	45,-			Sf. 45,-
fertilizing and earthing	120,-			120,-
pulling	360,-			360,-
stripping	825,-			825,-
seed			Sf. 420,-	420,-
herbicides			70,-	70,-
fertilizer			300,-	300,-
tools and bags			25,-	25,-
Total production costs				Sf. 3,005,-

Total yield: 1800 kg dried pulses