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III. PRIORITIES FOR RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

... After lengthy discussion on the possible ways of determining research priorities in agricultural marketing the Group came to the conclusion that the subject could not be dealt with in isolation but that all aspects of Agricultural Marketing such as Credit, Extension and Farmers' Attitude must also be considered.

It was emphasised that while the general research needs may be identified for the Region as a whole, each territory within the Region may have its own unique problems. Again, the marketing problems which may be associated with a particular crop or livestock product may not necessarily be the same for other crops, so that relative emphasis may vary.

It was recognised that very little coordination exists among research agencies such as the University, agencies of governments, and the private sector; and that any future research programmes must be well coordinated to avoid duplication of effort. Moreover, the research must be of a functional nature so that the results may form the basis for determining policy.

In examining the market research requirements of the Area, it became evident from the discussion that much of the 'marketing' problem was closely associated with problems on the production side and that much research was also needed in this field.

The Group came to the conclusion that the areas needing most urgent attention were:

1. Examination of the present marketing structure with special reference to distribution systems, distribution margins and the prospects for future development.
2. Problems of transport both within the individual territories and between territories.
3. A pricing policy for the Region which would take into consideration
 - (a) storage costs
 - (b) inventory control
 - (c) grading
 - (d) price stabilisation.
4. Processing.
5. Production problems in agriculture.

Summary of discussion of Workshop Report

An explanation of the criteria that may be used in determining research priorities was sought. It was felt that at this stage it would be difficult to rank research requirements in order of priority. There may well be work which has been done or which is in progress for which information was not readily available. The Workshop had sought to draw attention to areas which were understood to be under-researched or not researched at all. It may be said that governments are looking to the University for research in the areas delineated above.

It was felt that individual territories of the Region could undertake some research; U.W.I. could not do it all. The possibility of conflict was noted in this connection. It was suggested that one approach for establishing priorities was to recognise where the bottlenecks were occurring, delineate the problems and then research the particular problem area.

It was suggested that there was a need for an agency to look at prospects for 'new lines'; markets may exist for these 'new lines' but there may be no production. It seems justifiable to commit some resources to this objective: we should not be content to commit in future all resources available to traditional export crops.

The question of tackling problems on a regional level was raised. It was felt that problems of transport, marketing and pricing, could be tackled at the local level and the policy coordinated at the regional level.