

PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROPS IN THE HAMBANTOTA DISTRICT

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COTTON

MUCH work has been done to induce more widespread cultivation. For the present crop (1935-36 season) cotton seed to a total of 3 tons 7 cwt. has been issued for sowing. There is a decided increase in the area under crop this year, probably totalling 750 acres, distributed thus :—

East Giruwa Pattu	..	500	acres
Magam Pattu	..	200	„
West Giruwa Pattu	..	50	„

So far, prospects are good.

TUTICORIN CHILLIES

Our efforts to induce chilli cultivators to cultivate an area of chillies suitable for curing in addition to the local variety for green chillies, have been intensified this year, and for this purpose we have given out as free issues to interested cultivators around Middeniya and Bata-ata 860 lb. of selected Tuticorin and Indian chillies for sowing purposes :—

Middeniya	..	488	lb.
Bata-ata	..	372	lb.

FODDER GRASSES

The cultivation of fodder grass as food for cattle is an unknown practice throughout the Hambantota District.

This practice and the stall-feeding of cattle is the first essential step towards any systematic improvement in the breed of Ceylon cattle. This fact is well recognised by the Ministry of Agriculture, and special instructions have been received to encourage cattle owners to open up fodder grass fields as widely as possible.

Efforts in this direction have met with considerable success in the Matara and Galle Districts where conditions may be said to be more suitable.

It is now proposed to make a beginning in the Hambantota District. If the feasibility of the practice, as far as Hambantota District is concerned, is doubted, then sceptics would be well advised to visit the Experiment Stations at Bata-ata, Weeraketiya and Middeniya where excellent crops of Guinea grass and Napier grass are being raised under "dry farming" conditions.

West Giruwa Pattu is particularly favourable for the growth of fodder grass. Fodder grass responds readily to infrequent irrigation which is a point worth remembering when the cultivation is attempted anywhere eastward of Ambalantota.

PURELINE PADDY

1. The cultivation of Suduheenati is now widespread throughout the Kirindi and Walawe Irrigation Schemes, and in the Weeraketiya and Ranna localities it is now recognised as a desirable paddy, and is in demand.

2. This particular rice is much sought after by consumers in the larger towns—Matara and Galle—and even Colombo, and there is no doubt that if a Co-operative Sale Society was established at a suitable centre—such as Ambalantota—it would prove a great stimulus to the cultivation of Suduheenati, and it could also work up a profitable business in supplying the wants of consumers.

3. The work of developing the old cotton station at Ambalantota into a paddy experiment station has been started, and 20 acres are now under crop for the Maha season.

<i>Acreage.</i>	<i>Variety of Paddy.</i>
10 acres ..	Suduheenati (Pureline)
10 acres ..	Murungan (Local)

Besides raising stocks of pureline seed, this Station will investigate and demonstrate the value of various cultural implements and fertilisers.

IMPLEMENTS FOR PADDY CULTIVATION

All Agricultural Instructors' Ranges have now been provided with stocks of Arumugam ploughs and Burmese harrows for demonstration purposes, and for issues on loan to approved cultivators.

Considerable interest in the use of tillage implements for paddy cultivation has been aroused at Tissa, and it is hoped that paddy growers of the Walawe Right Bank Scheme will soon take a similar keen interest in these implements.