

THE WORLD'S COCONUT CROP*

SOME useful information may be obtained from the statistics of nut, copra and oil exports from the nut-producing countries of the world recently prepared in the Imperial Institute, London.

In the final summary of these statistics, coconut products exported are all reduced to one common denomination namely, nuts, and to achieve this, the following nut equivalent have been employed:

1 ton of copra	= 5,000 nuts.
1 ton of oil	= 8,125 nuts.
1 ton of nuts	= 1,400 nuts.

It must, of course, be understood that these equivalents are not true for all localities because of regional differences in wet meat weight per nut, in oil content per nut, and in whole fruit weight. For Malaya, the figures should be about 10% less than those shown above. This purely incidental observation does not detract from the value of the comparisons which may be made by a study of the abbreviated Table of Exports which has been prepared from the statistics of the Imperial Institute.

In this Table, only coconut products (exclusive of soap and glycerine) expressed as nut equivalents and actually exported are shown. Because one-third of the copra trade of Malaya is in copra imported into Penang and Singapore from surrounding islands for conversion into copra locally or for re-export, in this and in similar cases due correction has been made, and only the true exports shown. In one case, where the figures for 1928 are not available, an estimated figure, obtained from the figures for the previous three years is given instead.

The pre-eminence of the Philippine Islands and the Netherlands East Indies as nut-producing and copra-producing countries is very marked. Between them they produce about two-thirds of the world's nuts and over one half of the world's total annual production of copra which is in the neighbourhood of 100,000 tons of copra equivalent to 5,000,000 nuts. In copra production for export, Malaya comes fifth, with Ceylon a close sixth, though if consideration is allowed for the copra converted into oil in Ceylon then that colony becomes the senior copra-producing country of the two.

In the export of whole nuts, Malaya comes a good third. The collection of nuts for this purpose is confined to a few small districts, the bulk being mainly exported through Penang to Burma. Such nuts, whether for home use or for export are preferred under-ripe and for this reason, where nuts are picked both for conversion into copra and for human consumption, the quality of the copra is apt to suffer, as the very under-ripe all-green nuts which are preferred for eating yield only about half the weight of copra which may be obtained from fully ripe brown nuts, and the oil percentage of the copra obtained is much lower.

It will be seen that among the nut-producing regions of the world, the Philippine Islands take the lead for oil production, because nearly half the annual crop is converted into coconut oil on the spot. Ceylon comes next by crushing 38% of its annual crop. About one half of the oil so

* An analysis by F. C. Cooke, Assistant Chemist for Copra Investigations, Department of Agriculture, S.S. & F.M.S., of Statistics prepared by the Imperial Institute. From *The Malayan Agricultural Journal*, Vol. XVIII, No. 7, July 1930.

produced is imported to Great Britain and India takes a large proportion of the remainder for cooking and for domestic use. The Netherlands East Indies follows next in order and although only 10% of the annual crop is turned directly into oil, the aggregate so converted is almost equal to that for Ceylon. Malaya, on the other hand, is a bad fourth and although of the nuts produced locally, 10% are converted to oil, the aggregate is very small. When consideration is allowed for the total nut equivalents imported and also those consumed locally, the oil production drops to 5% of all the nuts handled.

In Malaya, oil mills are to be found at Penang, Singapore, Klang and Kuala Selangor, but very little of the oil produced, is for export to Europe or to the U.S.A., but is consumed mainly in Malaya and in the surrounding countries in the form of cooking oil and soap, and for other domestic purposes.

The explanation for the continued pre-eminence of the Philippine Islands in oil production may be due to the fact that they have satisfactory markets for cattle cake in the U.S.A. and Eastern Siberia or else to the absence of import duties and the preferential tariff for the entry of the oil into the U.S.A. This industry was first established on a large scale, on account of high prices ruling during the war. The exports of oil and copra from the Philippines are now nearly three times what they were in 1917 and it would appear that the stimulus of war prices resulted in a considerable extension of the planted areas which have since come into bearing.

The total consumption of nuts in all forms in Malaya is high, and may be estimated at 50 nuts equivalent per annum per head of the population of 4,000,000 people. This brings the total consumed locally to the not inconsiderable total of 200,000,000 nut-equivalents, or 25% of the annual crop. While this does not appear in the Table of Exports, the exports of nuts and oil for native consumption to the surrounding islands are, of course, included in the figures shown.

If allowance is made for local consumption of nuts in coconut-growing countries at an overall average of 10% of the crop, the world's annual yield of coconuts may be estimated as being in the neighbourhood of 8,000,000,000 nuts.

THE WORLD'S ANNUAL COCONUT CROP—1928

Table to show in what form nuts are exported, and the total number of nut-equivalents exported from each of the principal coconut-growing regions of the world.

Millions of Nuts Exported

Locality	As Nuts	As Copra	As Oil	Totals Exported
<i>Dutch East Indies</i>	N	2,191	255	2,446
<i>Philippines</i>	N	1,154	1,137	2,291
<i>Oceania: Fiji</i>	N	342	N	
New Guinea	N	230	N	
Solomons	N	78	N	
Tongan Isles	N	110	N	
West Samoa	N	60	N	
New Hebrides	N	51	N	
Papua	N	48	N	
Bilbert Isles	N	13	N	
	—	932	—	932

Locally	As Nuts	As Copra	As Oil	Totals Exported
<i>India and Ceylon :</i>				
Ceylon	18	494	317	
Malabar, etc.	N	$\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	
	18	494	320	832
<i>British Malaya :</i>				
Federated Malay States	N	342	N	
Unfederated Malay States	N	190†	N	
Straits Settlements	9	N†	60	
Sarawak	N	10	N	
North Borneo	N	16	N	
	9†	558	60	627
<i>West Indies, etc :</i>				
Trinidad	7	48	2	
Jamaica	31	17	N	
British Guiana	N	17	1	
Remainder	N	6	N	
	38	88	3	129
<i>East Africa :</i>				
Zanzibar	$\frac{1}{2}$	47†	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Tanganyika	N	47	N	
Mauritius	N	7	N	
Kenya and Uganda	N	7	N	
	$\frac{1}{2}$	108	$\frac{1}{2}$	109
<i>West Africa :</i>				
Nigeria	N	$\frac{1}{2}$	N	
Sierra Leone	N	N	N	
Gold Coast	N	7	N	
	—	7	—	8
GRAND TOTALS	65	5,533	1,176	7,374
				Million nut-Equivalents.

N = Nil or negligible. † = Corrected for imports ‡ = Approximate estimate