

Foodstuffs such as taro, yams, tapioca, maize, and other vegetables are cultivated in plantations, usually situated at a considerable distance from the villages.

The banana, of which there are several varieties, grows almost everywhere, and flourishes even in the rockiest areas of the island. Limes and lemons grow well; no attempt, however, has been made to cultivate the orange extensively, though experimental plantings have been made. Pia, or native arrowroot, is not cultivated, but grows wild in the bush and semi-barren areas. The extremely rocky nature of the island makes agriculture difficult, and practically all crops have to be grown in the small pockets of soil among the coral rocks. The only live-stock that can be kept under these conditions are pigs and poultry, the quality of which the Administration improves from time to time by importing new blood and varieties.

Niue does not abound in fish, which are neither plentiful nor easily caught on account of the absence of any natural harbour, beach, barrier reef, or other shallow water anywhere on the coast-line. Shell-fish are not abundant; land crabs are found and are used as food by the people.

A reconnaissance soil survey of Niue was undertaken by an officer of the Soil Bureau, New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, between 20th April and 25th May, 1949. The specific recommendations made by this officer in his report are as follows:—

- (1) Preparation of an educational brochure, mainly for use in the schools, on the urgent need to conserve organic matter in Niuean soils.
- (2) Appointment of an Agricultural Officer resident on the island to—
 - (a) Conduct experimental work in collaboration with the Departments of Agriculture in New Zealand and Fiji, and with the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in New Zealand.
 - (b) Advise the Administration concerning Ordinances relating to agricultural production.
 - (c) Assist with educational work in schools, and with evening talks to village committees.
 - (d) Develop demonstration projects in collaboration with Native land-owners.
- (3) Continuation of land survey and inauguration of a land title survey by a judicial Board, to confirm ownership and open up the way for permanent soil improvements.
- (4) Commence experiments in grassland establishment, dairy and beef farming, at Fonuakula.
- (5) Extension of experimental citrus orchards on lands adjacent to Fonuakula.
- (6) Field trials with nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash manures, with various legume crops, to find a means of shortening the interval between planting staple food crops without further impoverishing the soil.
- (7) Field trials with potash and nitrogen manures as a means of extending the useful life of banana plantations.

B. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

The economic life of the island is dependent upon the exports of copra, Native plaited ware, and bananas.

Under present-day conditions, copra is the largest and most valuable commodity of export. It is all Native grown and is sun-dried. The two local purchasing firms have entered into a nine years' contract for the supply of copra to the United Kingdom Ministry of Food, and under the terms of the agreement the production from Niue is actually shipped to New Zealand.