PD-AAC-689

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DATE SENT June 28, 1962

DATE REC'D.

SUBJECT . End of Tour Report Control No. U-513- Dr. August M. Gorenz, Plant Pathology Advisor.

REFERENCE . (Check one before each address)

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In accordance with M.O. 325.2, transmitted herewith is End of of Tour Report prepared by Dr. August M. Gorenz, Plant Pathology Advisor, USAID/Liberia, for the period October 11, 1961 to June 21, 1962.

Attachment, a/s

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ICA-5-40 (9-60) W/O HECTO — PRINTED 9-60

END OF TOUR REPORT

by

Dr. August M. Gorenz, Plant Pathology Advisor

This report covers the 9-month period October 11, 1961 to June 21, 1962 during which the duty station was the Central Agricultural Experiment Station at Suakoko, Liberia.

Assigned duties included the organizing of a Plant Disease Division and to act as advisor to the Entomology and Horticulture Departments. During the short tour no local counterpart was available to work with me. Many of the Liberians who have had technical training in the States in past years now hold purely administrative positions. Also many are now in the U.S. on training grants.

Cooperation from the local Department of Agriculture and Commerce was satisfactory. Laboratory facilities at the C.A.E.S. were good and supplies for the most part ample. Field labor was available when needed. Many consultations on plant disease and insect pests were made. These were most serious on garden crops. As a whole it was found that such factors as low soil fertility, lack of or too much soil moisture, problems of weeding and poor horticultural practices were more limiting than diseases or insects.

A study was made of the beekeeping possibilities for Liberia. Wild swarms of bees were captured and placed in home-made hives. Four colonies were established and their development observed. It was concluded that bees could be very useful as a small cottage industry. Beekeeping on a commercial scale would be impractical unless better nectar producing plants were introduced.

The life cycle of the coffee cherry borer (Stephanoderes hempei) was studied. Heavy infestation of the borers was found to be dependent on the presence of old, unharvested cherries from the previous year or from an earlier secondary crop. These offer refuge and shelter to the tiny beetles between crops. It was found that the beetle could not survive in old cherries kept under continuously moist conditions. If old, infested cherries are picked and allowed to fall to the ground in the rainy season the cherry rots and the beetles die. Old cherries left on the tree deteriorate slowly because of the intermittant drying and beetles can survive in them. It is considered that sanitation is a more effective and economic means of control of the borer than spraying, especially for the small grower. Previous efforts at control of this important coffee pest at the C.A.E.S. were based entirely on spraying with insecticides. It was also found that the percentage of infested berries would increase after picking by 100% or more when the whole cherry method of drying was used. In general, the deeper the layers of cherries on the drying floor the greater the increase in infestation after picking. The larvae of the beetle cannot propagate in dry cherries and fast drying is indicated.

Due to the lack of a counterpart no Plant Disease Division was organized. The Entomology Department was reorganized and excess supplies distributed. In the large experimental coffee plantings of the Department emphasis was shifted from routine spraying with fungicides and insecticides to much needed, better horticultural practices such as ring mulching, spot fertilization, and the establishing of a Pueraria cover crop. There has not been enough emphasis of the use of legume cover crops at the station. The pigeon pea and cowpea grow

well and can be also used for food. These, or the Crotalarias, Pueraria or Mucuna should be planted after other crops are harvested or on all abandoned land.

The following reports were submitted:

1. The Oil Palm in Liberia - A Summary Survey
2. The Possibilities for Beekeeping in Liberia
3. The Coconut Palm - A Summary of its Usefulness and Advantages as a Crop for Liberia