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A REVIEW OF LAND REFORM IN JAMAICA

FOR THE PERIOD 1972-1978

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SECOND YEAR :

II-1. O. Arboleda-Sepulveda (IICA-CIDIA), Agricultural Documentation and Information Network in Jamaica (Elements for a Proposal)

II-2. Victor Quiroga, National Agricultural Information System (NAIS- Jamaica) Project Profile, September, 1978.

II-3. Joseph. S. Johnson " A Review on Land Reform in Jamaica for the Period 1972-1978" September 1978

PREFACE.

The review is an important contribution not only in terms of the subject which it covers but also because of the link which it forms with the past and the basis which it provides for future projections.

Appropriately, the review only deals briefly with the Accelerated Land Reform Programme, presumably on the grounds that there is as yet too little documentation on this area of land reform in Jamaica.

The review adds to the list of documents prepared under the aegis of IICA/ Jamaica and helps it to maintain its objective of providing papers which can be used by technicians and academicians who have an interest in agricultural development.

The author who is Chief Agricultural Economist of the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture is well equipped to prepare this review because of his experience in this area and his knowledge of the subject. Indeed, he was one of the co-authors of the earlier paper titled "Land Settlement in Jamaica" (IICA Jamaica Publication # 6, December 1977).

As one of the co-authors of the previous review, I welcome this opportunity to write this foreword and to express the hope that this will be part of a continuum of reviews on the subject of Land Reform.

At a time when the foundations have already been laid for the Agricultural Census, this review appears to be even more timely than otherwise would have been the case, in providing a paralled paper which can broaden our basis for understanding and measuring progress in land reform.

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INTRODUCTION

1. This paper is intended to be a follow up to "Land Settlement in Jamaica."[1] Since this paper was written a lot has taken place in the area of land reform in Jamaica. This present review combined with the previous review should give a fairly comprehensive picture of the history of land settlement and land reform programmes in Jamaica to the year 1978.

2. Before considering the various land reform programmes, it may be worthwhile to consider the Government's policy goals which have a major influence on its programme of land reform. Basically the goals are as follows:-

   i) to ensure that all agricultural land is used to its fullest potential which will result in optimum economic and social benefits to the country as a whole.

   ii) land will be developed as a basis for:-
      a) improving access to resources and facilities for income generation by a large number of people through more equitable distribution of these resources;
      b) increasing the incomes of rural dwellers - particularly small farmers, landless workers and under-employed youth;
      c) improving rural amenities and social infrastructure, as a basis for raising the standard of living of rural people.

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[1] This paper was written by Dr. I.E. Johnson, M. Strachan and J.S. Johnson and presented at the 7th West Indies Agricultural Economic Conference in Grenada 1972. The paper dealt with land settlements in Jamaica from the early Colonial days to early 1972. (Published by IICA Jamaica in its Series "Agriculture in Jamaica" #6. December, 1977).

3. The need for a land reform programme was one of the recommendations of an Agricultural Sector Study done in 1973 by local personnel and a team provided by the World Bank. A look at the very skewed distribution of farm lands shown in the 1968/69 Agricultural Census also gives some indication of how important it was that a land reform programme be formulated and implemented.

4. Tables 1 and 2 from the 1968/69 Agricultural Census[1] showed that 78 percent of the number of farms had only 15% of the land in Agriculture, while at the other extreme, farms of over 500 acres represented only 0.15 percent of the number of farms, but represented 43% of the land in agriculture.

5. In view of the fact that the majority of the programmes in existence since 1972 have been runing concurrently to some extent, the period will not be subdivided. However, differentiation will be made from the point of view of the various programmes which have been in operation since 1972.

6. The major land reform programmes initiated since 1972 have been:-

   i) Project Land Lease
   ii) The Sugar Workers Co-operatives
   iii) The First Rural Development Project
   iv) The Integrated Rural Development Project
   v) Pioneer Farms.

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[1] Census of Agriculture, Jamaica 1968-69 Volume I Part B. Department of Statistics.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF FARMS BY SIZE GROUPS AND BY LAND AUTHORITIES - 1968/9

Land Authorities	Total	Land-less	Less than 1 acre	1 acre to under 5 acres	5 acres to under 10 acres	10 acres to under 25 acres	25 acres to under 50 acres	50 acres to under 100 acres	100 acres to under 200 acres	200 acres to under 500acres	500 acre and over
Yallahs Valley Area	11,215	139	2851	6,000	1,486	571	93	37	17	14	7
Morant Bay "	9,750	202	2,785	4,697	1,300	563	86	25	25	20	29
Port Antonio "	9,845	345	2,212	4,689	1,492	833	156	56	21	21	20
Port Maria "	17,527	314	4,874	8,707	2,293	990	156	81	46	35	31
Claremont "	14,155	519	3,268	6,243	2,085	1,532	330	96	37	18	27
Christiana "	16,159	54	4,401	9,009	1,841	709	86	32	13	10	4
Falmouth "	7,276	75	2,401	3,277	920	410	69	37	26	37	24
Cambridge "	21,659	522	6,943	9,855	2,522	1,374	257	79	36	31	40
Grange Hill "	15,511	515	6,637	6,202	1,210	643	171	53	25	26	29
Santa Cruz "	18,971	43	3,863	9,941	2,930	1,674	329	103	37	25	26
Mandeville "	10,567	65	2,188	5,775	1,496	782	164	55	18	15	9
May Pen "	21,114	842	5,663	10,058	3,060	1,167	192	44	33	37	18
Linstead "	19,610	1,133	4,890	9,508	2,594	1,122	191	67	45	31	29
ALL LAND AUTHORITIES	193,359	4,768	52,976	93,961	25,237	12,370	2,280	775	379	320	293

Source: Census of Agriculture Jamaica 1968-69. Department of Statistics.

TABLE 2 ACREAGE IN FARMS BY SIZE GROUPS AND BY LAND AUTHORITIES - 1968/9

LAND AUTHORITIES	TOTAL	Less-than 1 acre	1Acre to Under 5	5 acres to Under 10	10 acres to under 25 acres	25 acres to under 50 acres	50 acres to under 100 acres	100 acres to under 200 acres	200 acres to under 500 acres	500 acres and over
Yallahs Valley Area	51,035	1,238	13,493	9,647	7,949	3,061	2,398	2,448	4,163	6,638
Morant Bay "	94,659	1,151	10,508	8,639	7,787	2,835	2,453	3,290	6,229	51,667
Port Antonio "	75,562	894	10,725	9,904	11,736	5,185	3,936	2,705	6,518	24,059
Port Maria "	119,922	2,102	19,114	15,141	13,729	5,153	5,500	5,936	9,464	43,783
Claremont "	140,912	1,442	13,857	13,882	22,347	10,800	6,445	5,017	5,919	61,203
Christiana "	63,338	2,070	19,770	12,001	9,928	2,834	2,209	1,997	3,069	9,460
Falmouth "	100,877	1,009	6,990	6,162	5,841	2,286	2,566	3,375	11,182	61,466
Cambridge "	147,857	2,915	20,648	16,529	19,578	8,396	5,325	4,982	9,095	60,399
Grange Hill "	120,883	2,735	12,522	8,011	9,303	5,667	3,488	3,487	8,337	67,333
Santa Cruz "	170,325	1,839	22,163	19,214	23,661	10,673	6,911	4,784	7,681	73,410
Mandeville "	80,257	1,068	12,663	9,891	11,063	5,440	3,709	2,613	4,784	29,026
May Pen "	168,165	2,296	22,818	20,045	16,207	6,325	2,921	4,418	10,966	82,169
Linstead "	155,275	1,977	21,209	16,839	15,623	6,063	4,629	6,064	9,525	73,346
ALL LAND AUTHORITIES	1,480,183	22,736	206,480	165,905	174,852	74,718	52,490	51,116	96,932	643,050
Percentages	100	1.53	13.87	11.14	11.74	5.02	3.52	3.43	6.51	43.24

Source: Censur of Agriculture Jamaica 1968-69. Department of Statistics.

Note: There has been a reversion from Land Authorities to Parishes since 1977.

PROJECT LAND LEASE

7. The major vehicle through which the land reform programme has been implemented since 1973 has been Project Land Lease. Though Jamaicans traditionally prefer to own the lands that they farm as shown by the percent free-hold tenure in the 1968/69 Census of Agriculture when 80% of the number of farms were free-hold, The Government argues with merit that the lease-hold system has a number of advantages over the freehold namely:-

   i) The leasehold system relieves the farmers of the burden of having to finance the high cost of land purchase, allowing them to use their money for land preparation and the production of crops and livestock.

   ii) It allows the Government as the land-lord to have greater control in ensuring that the lands are used effectively.

   iii) This type of tenure prevents the purchase of agricultural lands for speculative purposes rather than for productive purposes.

   This approach falls in line with the stated policy of Government to encourage and assist farmers to pursue procedures which favour rights of use (usufruct) rather than of mere ownership for its own sake. This constitutes a departure from the old land settlement scheme.

8. The programme started in 1973 under what was later to be termed Phase I, but by 1974 its operations were divided into three distinct Phases i.e. I,II and III. Under all three phases farmers are provided with land on a leasehold system of tenure and credit is provided in-kind for land preparation, planting materials, fertilizers and other key inputs.

   By March 1978 a total of 457 properties had been acquired by Government largely by leasing for the land lease programme. This land consisted of 111,614 acres of which 56 percent or 62,640 acres are arable.

There is the added importance in relation to the quality of land. Under the former programmes dating back to 1939 land of very poor quality was acquired (purchased) for settling. Under the present scheme more land of good quality has been made available and the 56% arable land is a reflection of this improvement.

PHASE I

9. As indicated above this phase started in 1973. Under this phase, supplemental tenancy is provided for farmers within a reasonable distance (2 miles) from their homes. The tenancy is given for a period of five years in the first instance, provision being made for an extension for a further 5 -year period based on the farmer's performance. Lands leased to farmers under this phase are primarily, privately owned lands which have been leased by the Government for a period of 6 years in the first instance.

The Government in turn sublets to the small farmers having uneconomic size units. As in all phases farmers are provided with credit in-kind. A more intensive extension service is also provided under the programme than in the rest of agriculture.

10. As of March 1978 some 24,238 farmers were placed on 43,227 acres of arable lands, giving an average of 1.8 acres per farmer.

PHASE II

11. This phase of the programme began in 1974. Under this phase farmers with uneconomic size farms are given supplemental land on a lease-hold basis for 49 years in the first instance, with inheritance rights provided. The lands leased under this phase are owned by the public sector. The objective of this phase is to provide a permanent type of tenure and to bring the farmer's holding to an economic unit. Minimal infrastructure, mainly road is provided under this phase. Farmers are provided with credit in-kind for financing agricultural development projects.

12. As of March 1978 some 8,958 farmers were placed on 17,361 acres of arable lands under this phase.

PHASE III

13. This phase of the project also started in 1974. It is designed to provide the prospective farmer with a complete economically viable farm on a 49 year lease-hold basis. Again, lands leased under this phase are publicly owned. In frastructural facilities namely roads, housing, water supply (including irrigation where possible) and in some cases electricity are provided. Credit is provided in-kind as in the other phases.

14. As of March 1978 some 1,006 farmers were placed on 4,552 acres of arable lands under this phase.

15. In the earlier years of the project emphasis was placed on Phase I, since it was easier to reach a large number of farmers wanting land under this phase at a fairly low cost to Government per farmer settled. It was felt, however, that if care was not taken this phase could lead to a very high incidence of land fragmentation.

The decision was taken therefore to put more emphasis on phases II and III. As a result of the very high cost to Government, per settler under Phase III, however, primarily because of the housing component, more emphasis is likely to be placed on phase II in the near future, with the settler expected to make a larger contribution than in the past.

16. The Sugar Workers Cooperatives

In 1971 the Government purchased some 74,000 acres of land which comprised the island's two largest sugar estates, Frome and Monymusk and Bernard Lodge a medium size sugar estate. All three estates were owned by Foreign Companies, the first two by Tate and Lyle and Bernard Lodge by the United Fruit Co. now United Brands. The Frome

Monymusk Land Co. was formed by the Government, to manage these estates until a system of tenure could be organised.

17. In July 1974 three sugar workers cooperatives were formed, one on each estate to be pilot projects, with one pilot project on each of the estates, (Barham at Frome, Morelands at Monymusk and Salt Pond at Bernard Lodge). Each cooperative averaged about 2,000 acres of sugar cane with membership about 200 each. Each member of the Cooperative was required to put 50% of his severance pay into the financing of the Cooperative. The former sugar workers therefore became the members of the Co-ops, with the members forming their own management committee. A 49-year lease-hold tenure was given to these Cooperatives.

18. In December 1975 another 17 Sugar Workers' Cooperatives were formed, followed by three more in January 1977. To provide support services to the 23 Primary Cooperatives, three Estate Cooperatives and one Control Cooperative were formed.

19. Approximately 47,000 acres of land have been leased to the Cooperatives, 39,560 acres of which are in sugar cane. Membership is approximately 5,000. In addition there are about 260 staff members employed to the Cooperatives. These are mostly managerial, technical, accounting and clerical personnel.

20. The three pilot Cooperatives, assisted by a very favourable international sugar price were in a very good financial positions in 1975. They all had very good cash surpluses from their operations. By 1976, however, due largely to reduced sugar prices the surplus had been reduced considerably and in one case the situation had reverted to a loss position.

21. The fact that Cooperative members had control over the operation of the three pilot Cooperatives generated considerable interest and desire for establishing more Cooperatives. With the reduction in the price of sugar on the World Market, reduced sugar cane yields as a result of a drought and insufficient irrigation water, many of the cooperators have lost the initial enthusiasm. In addition, the fact that most of the members of the Cooperatives got insufficient training in cooperative management, in technical aspects of sugar production and in general business management did much to limit their performance.

22. For the immediate future it is vital that an evaluation of the cooperatives be done to correct short-comings and training be intensified so that the Cooperatives can achieve their true potential. Training should be concentrated on technical aspects of sugar cane production, cooperative management ie. participative management, a greater consciousness of the necessity to work collectively and general business management.

23. <u>The First Rural Development Project</u>

Inspite of the fact that the Land Lease Project and the Sugar Workers Cooperatives were being implemented, the Government continued to consider ways and means for implementing a more comprehensive land reform programme. After much deliberation , a decision was taken in November 1974 to use Integrated Rural Development Projects as the major thrust in the land reform programme.

24. Implementation of the First Rural Development Project started in 1977. This Project has been confined to the County of Cornwall or what is termed the Western Region. The parishes of St. James, Trelawny, Hanover, Westmoreland and St. Elizabeth make up the Western Region. The project is estimated to cost US$31.4 million and is being funded by a loan of US$15.0 million from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) and US$16.4 million by the Government of Jamaica.

25. Objectives of the Project

The main objectives of the project are as follows:-

(i) to support Government's existing Project Land Lease (PLL) policy, which aims at reducing under-utilization of agricultural land and rural unemployment by settling new farmers and raising the income of existing farmers, by acquiring under-utilized agricultural lands, and leasing to farmers for forty nine (49) years;

(ii) to assist Government programme to improve the economic and social infrastructure of the Western Region;

(iii) to facilitate the implementation of the re-organisation of the Ministry of Agriculture.

26. The Agricultural Settlement Component

The main agricultural settlement components of the project are as follows:-

(i) selection and settlement of 1,400 families with adequate farming qualifications on approximately 15,500 acres of land, 6,570 acres of which are arable;

(ii) construction of 820 farm houses;

(iii) provision of electricity and domestic water supply;

(iv) provision of roads, including 10 miles access roads to settlement sites, 10 miles village roads and 40 miles farm roads connecting village sites with the farming areas;

(v) provision of community facilities at the settlement sites (community centres, storerooms, packing and buying sheds and banana boxing plants);

(vi) soil conservation measures and afforestation of approximately 1,400 acres;

(vii) provision of credit for farm development; and

(viii) provision of technical assistance by the Ministry of Agriculture.

27. The Non Agricultural Component

The main economic and social infrastructure to be provided are:-

(i) construction and reconstruction of 70 miles of rural feeder roads;

(ii) construction and rehabilitation of nine (9) parish markets;

(iii) construction and installation of 6,000 waste disposal units; and

(iv) extension of 37 existing water supply systems and the construction of 4 new systems.

28. The Integrated Rural Development Project

The second rural development project, otherwise called the Integrated Rural Development Project is confined to two watersheds areas in the Southern Region namely Pindar's River in Clarendon and Two Meetings in Manchester. The project covers approximately 30,000 acres and is occupied by some 25, 000 persons. The majority of land is privately owned by small farmers.

29. Objectives and Project Components

The major objectives of the project are:-

(i) to improve the standard of living of small hillside farmers;

(ii) improve the housing in the target area of the residents in the target area;

(iii) provide electricity and domestic water supplies;

(iv) construct and upgrade rural feeder roads:

(v) provide agricultural credit to farmers; and

(vi) to establish an agricultural production model that can be replicated on small hillside farms in Jamaica's watersheds.

30. Cost and Funding of the Project

The project is estimated to cost US$26.2 million. Funding is being provided through a US/AID loan of US$13.0 million and grant of US$2.0 million with the Government of Jamaica providing the remainder of the funds. The loan agreement for this project was signed in February 1978, with implementation due to start in the second half of 1978.

31. Pioneer Farms

A new thrust in the land reform programme is being made on the pioneer farm concept. Selected farms known as pioneer farms are being used for accelerating the land reform programme and at the same time providing employment opportunities for youths and setting the stage for the future Community Enterprise Organizations.

32. This programme started in late 1977. The farms are being set up to be operated on a co-operative basis, with emphasis on discipline and self reliance in the group. Each farm is being organised by its members under the supervision of a farm manager assigned from the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Service in the Parish. Field Assistance along with a Youth Service Worker is also provided. This type of assistance is regarded as vital in the early stages for each farm, since many of the pioneers have little farming and management skills initially.

33. The Pioneer Farm Programme will be monitored and supported at the Parish and Regional levels by Pioneer Farm Officers. These officers are responsible for achieving production and placement targets and ensuring all necessary inputs including the proper selection and training of the pioneer farm members.

34. The farms are benefiting and will continue to benefit from an initial capital outlay for the first 3-6 months of establishment. This is to take care of planting materials and to meet the requirements for working capital until the project is "well off the ground." In addition the farms quality for services and credit as under Project Land Lease. Each Pioneer Farm will have a work study and recreational

programme designed to improve agricultural and other skills of the members and to ensure adequate sporting and other recreational activities.

35. Some six Pioneer Farms have already been established. Within the next five years it is anticipated that about 15,000 young farmers should be placed on approximately 37,500 acres of land. Size of farms is expected to vary from 100 to 200 acres depending on the land class and land availability for the establishment of viable units. It is proposed that the farms should average 50 farmers per cooperative with ages ranging from 18-25 years, comprised of both male and female.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

36. Since 1972, a large number of people have benefited from the Government's Land Reform Programmes. Present proposals indicate that large numbers (primarily the young people) will continue to gain access to lands for farming.

37. Though the achievements in production and productivity have been good in some instances, there is little doubt that much more can be achieved from the lands that have been made available to the farmers. Because of the terrain and nature of the land involved the heavy infrastructural costs have tended to limit the rate of generation of net income. Every effort must therefore be made to consolidate the achievements so far in order to utilize the lands to their optimum potential.

38. In order to achieve this productivity drive, emphasis will need to be directed at training of the farmers in general, but more so in co-operative management for members of the Sugar Workers Co-operatives. Credit needs to be supervised more carefully. Extension Services and the passing on of Research findings to the farmers will have to be intensified. Firmer measures will need to be taken against farmers who obtain lands under the land reform programme but are not producing. Along with these measures it is vital that there be a marked improvement in the marketing of domestic food crops.

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