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ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF HEVEA

THESIS PRESENTED

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ABSTRACT

The extraction of latex from the rubber tree is the most expensive operation in the production of raw rubber. A proper economic evaluation of tapping is therefore of vital importance.

Tapping experiments were carried out on RRIC 45, RRIC 52, RRIC 7 and PB 86, comparing different intensities from 100% to 200%. The covariance analysis on the yield per tree per tapping indicated, that in all four clones, the full spiral and double cut tapping systems gave a higher yield during the first year of the experiment. Observations will be made to establish whether this initial high yield will persist over a number of years. All four clones under test gave higher yields under the higher intensities of tapping, with clone PB 86 performing best under all systems.

The yield data gathered from this experiment was also used to compare the performance of each of the four clones tapped on different intensities in terms of the crop of dry rubber harvested per tapper per tapping as this constitutes a vital factor in ascertaining production costs, especially at times of low rubber prices. The data were also used to assess yield per acre obtainable under each tapping system.

Preliminary observations were made on the vegetative and anatomical characters of the selected clones. The anatomy of the bark tissue from tapping panel area was investigated. A staining procedure for the latex vessels was also devised in the preparation of permanent slides of the bark tissue.

The process of wintering in Hevea in different clones was also studied along with the weather factors affecting the yield variations of the trees.

CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
... ..	
Evolution of tapping systems	2
International Notation of Tapping Systems	5
 MATERIALS AND METHODS	 11
Materials	
RRIC 52	11
RRIC 7, RRIC 45, RRIC 88, PB 86	12
Methods	
Large scale Tapping Experiment	14
Intensive Tapping Experiment	20
Rainguard Experiment	21
Experiment to ascertain the effect of weather factors on yield of <u>Hevea</u>	21
Experiment to study seasonal variation in relation to yield of <u>Hevea</u>	22
Plugging index studies	22
Flow pattern studies	23
Investigation into the anatomy of the tapping panel	24
Stain for young <u>Hevea</u> tissue	26
Staining solution for older <u>Hevea</u> bark tissue	26
 RESULTS	
Large scale tapping experiments	28
Yield per tree per tapping	28
Yield of dry rubber and scrap per acre per year	37
Yield per tapper per year	44
Yield per tapper per tapping	58
Intensive tapping experiment	58

	Page
Yield per unit area or unit length of tapping cut ...	63
Differences in yield between upper and lower tapping cuts	67
Economics of tapping with rainguards	67
Effect of <u>Oidium</u> leaf disease	69
Effect of environmental factors on <u>Hevea</u>	71
Incidence of Brown Bast and wind damage	73
Bark Consumption	73
Bark renewal and girth increment	75
Mineral content of rubber	79
Dry rubber content (drc)	81
Plugging index studies	81
Flow pattern studies	83
Anatomy of tapping panel	95
DISCUSSION	103
CONCLUSION	118
ADDENDUM	
Slaughter tapping	122
Progressive reorganisation of tapping task	123
Measurements of performance and labour remuneration	126
Intercropping to improve estate economy	128
LITERATURE CITED	130
APPENDIX	137
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	160