

GROWING SWEET POTATO- FOR SALE

AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE SECRETARY OF D.P.I.

By R. Michael Burke, Principal Horticulturist, Highlands Agricultural Experiment Station, Aiyura, E.H.P.

INTRODUCTION

Sweet potato, or kaukau, is the most important crop in Papua New Guinea. It is the staple food for all Highlanders, except in the Telefomin District. It is now becoming the staple food in many parts of the lowlands, for example, on Bougainville and New Ireland and in certain locations on the mainland. It is increasing in importance all the time in the lowlands.

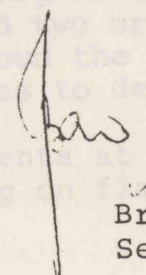
As well, sweet potato is an important cash crop that is worth many millions of kina a year. It is the main food grown by institutions in the country. There is no other country in the world where sweet potato is so important to the national economy.

Because of this, a lot of research has been done by D.P.I. staff on sweet potato. Much of this work has been done at the Highlands Agricultural Research Station, Aiyura, in the Eastern Highlands Province. Research has also been done at the Lowlands Agricultural Experiment Station, Keravat, in the East New Britain Province, at the Agriculture Research Centre, Bubia, near Lae, at Laloki near Port Moresby, in the Western and Southern Highlands Provinces and in the Simbu Province.

This issue of HARVEST is devoted to this important crop. Articles written by different authors have been brought together so that the results of research can be made available to farmers, D.P.I. extension officers, missionaries, school teachers and other interested people.

There are 13 articles on sweet potato in this issue of HARVEST. They are written by D.P.I. research staff at Aiyura, Keravat, Laloki, Bubia, the Highlands Agricultural College, Kuk Agricultural Research Station, and the Simbu Land Use Project, Kundiawa.

This is the first time that an issue of HARVEST has been devoted to a single commodity. It is fitting that such an issue is concerned with the country's most important crop. I hope that the information contained in this issue of HARVEST can be used to help increase sweet potato production in Papua New Guinea.


Brown Bai
Secretary, D.P.I.