
New Opportunities for Training in Agriculture

1973 will see two big steps forward in agricultural education in Papua New Guinea. The Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Papua New Guinea will commence a 4-year course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Agricultural Science, while DASF will open the Highlands Agricultural Training Institute which will concentrate at first on providing further training for staff already in the department.

The University course in Agriculture will, in general, follow the Science course for the first 2 years, though the study of Economics will be included right from the start. In the third year it will concentrate on specific aspects of agriculture, and in the fourth year the students will move to Lae where there are greater opportunities to see a diversity of agricultural developments. The course in Lae will be conducted at the Institute of Technology which has excellent facilities for instruction in agricultural engineering.

At the Highlands Agricultural Training Institute the students will, for the most part, be Rural Development Assistants and Project Managers. Some of these officers have had considerable experience in the field but they have missed the opportunity for advanced agricultural training. To make up for this lack, the course will broaden their general education and give them specific training in farm management, extension methods and rural credit facilities. Probably the most frequent help asked of DASF field staff is by farmers wishing to apply for a loan from the Development Bank. All extension staff should be able to assist in this matter. The course is primarily designed for DASF staff but applications will be considered from those who have had similar experience in private enterprise.

Vudal Agricultural College and Popondetta Agricultural Training Institute will continue to operate their current programmes. Entry to these institutions is not limited to those already connected with DASF, nor does it involve any kind of bond to the Department.