

EXCELLENT MARKET FOR CHILLIES

Birds-eye chillies are now being cultivated for sale in many part of Papua New Guinea.

The world market for birds-eye chillies is expanding and the prices are buoyant. The Department of Primary Industry is now paying 42 t per kilogram for dried birds-eye chillies in main ports of Lae and Port Moresby.

Last year, 1975-76, the Department purchased 200 tonnes of dried chillies from growers, and after sales to both local and overseas buyers it made a gross return of K 120 000.

From the size of the world market which is around 1 100 tonnes per year, one can see that PNG is starting to hold a significant share of this market, and by closely watching the quality of the commodity, the Department

will be out to ensure that this share is maintained.

Western European countries make up the bulk of the market, although Australia and New Zealand do buy a small proportion of our chillies.

PNG's main rivals would be Nigeria and Tanzania, who are the traditional producers.

While the Southern Highlands and Milne Bay Provinces produce the bulk of the crop, chillies are also grown in other provinces. They are often planted together with other cash crops. Although chillies are not regarded as a major income-earning cash crop, due to the high requirement for labour, they could be a very important crop for the family to fall back on when prices for other crops are low.

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