

AN AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMME — KAVUI COMMUNITY SCHOOL IN WEST NEW BRITAIN

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Since the end of 1974, the Department of Primary Industry, Kimbe, has assisted the Education Department in the Province of West New Britain with agriculture in community schools. The most successful school programme attained during this time has been achieved by Kavui Community School. This school, established only since 1973 has an enrolment of over 400 pupils drawn from the Kavui subdivision of the Hoskins Oil Palm Scheme. The children have come from many areas of Papua New Guinea. Groups represented are Sepik, Chimbu, Tolai, Morobe, West New Britain, Papuan and Irian Jaya.

The effectiveness of the school's agricultural programme can be attributed to a number of factors, these being as follows:-

1. Teacher interest and agricultural ability.
2. Pupil interest.
3. D.P.I. assistance and co-operation.
4. Parent and community interest.
5. Suitability of the programme to the area.
6. One day per week set aside for agriculture, community and cultural activities.

The aim of the school's agricultural programme is to help children on leaving community school to fit better into their own communities rather than be alienated from their parents and their culture, which is largely agricultural.

The projects and programmes established in the school are many and varied. The pupils are actively involved in the maintenance and development of these projects. The programme is as follows:-

SCHOOL GARDENS - The school utilizes its land area by planting food in traditional gardens, and gardens containing introduced vegetables. The traditional gardens contain aibika, sweet potato, tapioca, peanuts, bananas, pawpaw, chinese taro, karakap, sugar cane and corn. The corn was originally supplied by the Department of Primary Industry, these stocks coming from the Lowland Agricultural Experiment Station, Keravat.

The introduced vegetables grown successfully are European cabbages (a Japanese variety called K-K cross with head weights of between 1.5 - 2.5 kilograms), cauliflowers (Snow Peak), capsicums (California Wonder) okra (Clemson's Spineless) silver beet (Fordhook



Corn supplied by the Department of Primary Industry growing in the school garden



Student of Kavui Community School picking European-type cabbage for sale at a market, (Variety is K-K cross, head weight 2.2 kg)

Master), lettuce (Pennlakes), and tomatoes (Tropic). The varieties have been proven by the Department of Primary Industry in this area and seeds were obtained for the school. These vegetables have a ready market with the general public and the nearby town of Kimbe. A market house has been set up within the school grounds where produce is sold to the public.

In a recent nutrition survey carried out by D.P.I. on the dietary habits of community school children on the Oil Palm Scheme of which Kavui is part, the incidence of children being sent to school without any food, or with pocket money only, was 45% (8% population sample). School gardens are an important way of overcoming the problem of malnutrition of school children and pupil access to the food in the gardens is essential for good nutrition. Kavui Community School caters for this by selling garden produce to pupils at low price and planting a wide variety of fruits and food-bearing trees.

Beans grown in the gardens are pigeon pea, cow peas, soya beans, mung beans, wing beans, and snake beans. The cow peas are being used as a cover-crop on the old garden sites to help rejuvenate the soil. The school gardens are in a limited area so no bush fallow system can operate, therefore, the school must depend on crop rotation to assist maintenance of soil fertility.

FRUIT TREES - Kavui is a new school. It was commenced in 1973 but already is planning for children of future years. All around the school grounds, fruit trees such as rambutans, citrus, avocados, soursop, mangoes, lau laus, guavas and many coconuts have been planted. There are some shade trees planted but the emphasis has been on trees which will supplement the diet of active school children throughout the day. Fruit trees as listed above plus the planting of pawpaws around school yards is one of the most effective and long-lasting ways of overcoming dietary deficiencies in school children.

OTHER CROPS

Other crops of interest grown at the school are sorghum whose seed has been supplied from a plot established in the area by the Department of Primary Industry. The sorghum will be crushed and used for chicken feed. Rice has also been grown and processed at the school. Pepper has been established in conjunction with the Department of Primary Industry, Kavui.

FISH

A freshwater creek near the school has been dammed and made into a fish pond. The pond has been stocked with mullet and whiting fingerlings.

CULTURAL GARDEN

The different cultures and backgrounds of the pupils have promoted



The drying house which has a sliding floor which can be slipped in and out depending on the weather

the construction of a cultural garden. Within this garden there are many different plants grown which are used for traditional and ceremonial decorations. There is a men's house and a women's house. Plants used to weave baskets, such as pandanus, and vine used for Buka baskets are planted for the craft lessons.

LIVESTOCK

(a) CHICKENS

A chicken house built from timber and bush materials and surrounded by a high chicken-wire fence houses approximately 120 chickens; 100 were purchased as day-olds from Port Moresby and 20 as 8 week-olds from the Department of Primary Industry distribution centre on the Oil Palm Scheme. The chickens are raised on a deep litter system. The responsibility for the chickens' daily feeding and watering rests on the pupils. Imported feeds are fed to the chickens but when possible the school makes up feed from ground peanuts and dried scraped tapioca, sorghum and other foods available plus greens.

(b) PIGS

Pigs are kept in a timber, bush material pen and fed daily with cooked tapioca, chinese taro, etc. The food is cooked by pupils in a cook house adjacent to the pigs' house.

VILLAGE TECHNOLOGY

Emphasis is put on village technology within the school. A drying house made from timber and bush materials with a sliding floor is used to dry peanuts, corn and foods used for preserving. The sliding floor can be easily returned under cover in the event of rain. One of the aims of agriculture in the school is to eliminate food wastage from the gardens.

Tapioca flour is made out of poor and good quality tapioca and used in cooking classes. This is made by a process of removing the skin, scraping the tapioca, sun drying for 3 days and pounding the tapioca to a fine flour. Coconut oil, made from locally grown coconuts is processed by boiling off the water from coconut milk. Jams and preserved foods from pineapples and pawpaws are also made. Oil palm oil is extracted from the locally produced oil palm fruit. This can be used as a cooking oil. Peanut butter is made from the peanuts.

SCHOOL CANTEEN

Money made from the sale of food produce has been put towards the building of a school canteen. The pupils run this themselves as an exercise in business management.

These projects have been achieved within eighteen months of commencement and already the influence is spreading to the community.

Introduced vegetable growing for the town market has increased considerably in the area since the school commenced its programme. Other influences to the community have been through the livestock. Seed from corn, sorghum, cow peas, etc. has been distributed to other schools and people. The technology used at the school is applicable to the people in the area.

The influence the Kavui school has made within its area has been considerable. It is also a practical demonstration and guideline to other schools throughout West New Britain of a system that makes the name "Community School" a realistic one.



Mr Robinson Kadir, Kavui Community School Principal at the school canteen built by proceeds from the school gardens



The market house built by the Kavui Community School. Tomatoes and cabbages being sold to the public (white marks on cabbages are insect dust)