

BOOK REVIEW

Root Development of Cocoa in Papua New Guinea Soils. D.F. Freyne, P. Bleeker, B.M. Way and P. Jeffrey 1996. PNG Cocoa and Coconut Research Institute, Kerevat (Distributor). \$20. Soft Cover. 118 pp. ISBN 9980-9989-0-3.

The Cocoa and Coconut Research Institute (CCRI) of Papua New Guinea has produced a wealth of extension documents over the recent years. The publication under review, though published in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL) and New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance (NZODA), is nevertheless first comprehensive scientific publication initiated by CCRI.

The said work was originally completed in 1986 but remained in the files of DAL till 1996. CCRI's Director, Dr John Moxon, recently took the initiative in having the work organized for publication with a grant from NZODA negotiated through DAL.

The study deals with the physiological development of the cocoa tree root system, across a broad section of PNG's soils. The intention being to develop an authoritative land evaluation system for cocoa which could be used by those interested in the growing of cocoa in Papua New Guinea. The publication presents analyses of data on root development of cocoa compiled for sixty-three sites in twelve provinces. The soils were consequently grouped into six categories in accordance with their capacity to support cocoa root development.

However, as the authors conclude that a knowledge of the physical attributes of any site or area is only one aspect of determining its suitability for profitable cocoa cultivation. Quite indispensable as well are the knowledge of the soil nutrients and climatic characteristics of the cultivation area/site. The publication also provides an overview of various sources of computer linked information, available in PNG, in selecting representative sites for Genotype x Environment experiments.

The publication in addition provides a brief overview of the geology and landform, soils, climate and vegetation types found in PNG. There are a few avoidable errors, e.g on p.81, 5.1.3 is repeated twice. A vigorous proof reading would have been beneficial. I feel, despite these minor criticisms, the publication would be useful to a variety of agriculturists in PNG.

Lots of valuable research data on PNG Agriculture lie buried in DAL files. Some of these have been published in the PNG Journal of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in the last three years but lot more meaningful publications could emerge if concerted efforts were made to put pen to the paper as done by CCRI in persisting that Root Development of Cocoa in Papua New Guinea Soils sees the light of the day.

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