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FIRST REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON COFFEE BERRY DISEASE

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COUNTRY REPORT

COFFEE BERRY DISEASE IN CAMEROON

DOCUMENTATION

by

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Due to the absence of official representants of Cameroon, and having been more than 20 years in this country, I would like give you some informations on Coffee Berry Disease I studied there a very long time.

Cameroon is not a very great arabica producer. In fact, if Coffee, with more than 100 000 Tons in 1980, is, in value, the most important production — almost all being exported — this production counts more than 75 000 Tons of robusta and around 30 000 Tons of arabica.

Arabica is grown, in Cameroon, in the west part of the country at three levels of altitude :

- near 1100 m where shade is necessary or at least useful due to a very hard dry season ; the shade trees are mainly *Leucoena glauca* ; this lowest part counts about 15 000 hectares ;

- near 1300 m where we find the most important zone of production (near 100 000 ha) ;

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- from 1500 m and above, covering about 25 000 hectares.

In the middle and upper levels, shade is not necessary and generally not used.

The surface under arabica coffee is near 140 000 hectares almost all - more than 95 % - in hands of small holders having between 0,6 to 1 ha.

The average production per hectare is low, between 150 to 200 kg of clean coffee per hectare. The weakness of that production per surface unit is due to the fact that, generally, arabica coffee is grown in association with a lot of food crops (maize, banana, beans, pea-nuts, etc) all of them being more or less in concurrence with coffee for space, water and mainly nutrients.

The reason of this association is the lack of soil, the population in that country being between 50 to 70 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>.

If coffee is grown alone and well managed the production may be very high, the climate as well as the soil (often of volcanic nature) being very favourable to that culture : it is possible to obtain a production of 2 kg clean coffee per tree that means 2 Tons/hectare.

Coffee Berry Disease occurred for the first time in 1956 in the english speaking part of the country and spread in an explosive way in the french speaking part in 1958 ; all the upper level of production is concerned by the disease ; some limited places of the middle level are also affected according to microclimatic conditions ; it is known that in the lowest part the fungus exists, giving typical symptoms of the disease from time to time but never in an economic way.

In summary, Coffee Berry Disease is in Cameroon, as in other african arabica producing countries, a disease of high altitude. In that country it affects only a few part of the total arabica producing area, that means only about 20 000 to 25 000 hectares.

Therefore, CBD has not for the national coffee industry in Cameroon, a so great importance as in Kenya, but it is very important, due to its very severe damages, which may reach 80 % of the production, for all the farmers concerned, coffee being for that people the main cash crop.

It is the reason why a very great attention was given to CBD when it occurred in the country in 1958 ; a great number of studies were made from this moment until to now to give the farmers a good policy of direct control by chemicals (which is now possible technically as well as economically) and, for the long term, to find resistant varieties (which is now in a good way).

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