

Factors Affecting the Expansion, Development and Survival of Other Agricultural Enterprises

The chart below tells you what the different countries produced:

Country	Crops produced for the export market
Dominica	Limes, specialized in citrus crops, cotton cacao and coffee
Grenada	Specialized in spices. She became known as the spice island. Nutmegs, cacao and coffee
Jamaica	Ginger, pimento, bananas, coffee, coconut and rice
St. Lucia	Limes, cacao, cotton and coffee
St. Vincent	Arrowroot, coffee and cotton
Trinidad	Cacao, coconuts, coffee and rice
Guyana	Rice

By the late 19th century, a number of external factors helped to secure the survival of these new crops.

1. In 1880 Lorenzo D. Baker, established the **Boston Fruit Company**. He financed the opening of banana plantations near Port Antonio and Port Morant in the eastern end of the island of Jamaica. By 1912, Banana represented fifty per cent (50%) of Jamaica's exports.



Boston Fruit Company

2. This company was later taken over by the giant multinational corporation the **United Fruit Company**. The U.F.C. came to control the banana industry in much of the Caribbean until the 1930's.



United Fruit Company

3. Continuous imports of large number of Chinese and Indian immigrants helped in the expansion and survival of the rice industry. This was especially so for British Guiana whose coastal lowlands and swamps were excellent for rice production.



Rice fields

- 4.** The invention and introduction of refrigeration enabled the export of perishable fruits and other items. The creation of faster and more efficient shipping services also helped in this.
- 5.** There was a new demand in the United States of America and the United Kingdom for chocolate and cocoa as a hot beverage. This increase demand stimulated a corresponding increase in the production of cacao especially in Trinidad.
- 6.** It provided a vital source of income and livelihood for a number of the lower classes whose only hope of social mobility was via the ownership and use of the land. This too was the only avenue through which they could earn enough to send their children to school and give them a chance to enter the profession of their choice.

But there were problems too....

- 1.** Some of the new crops struggled against competition against alternatives that were cheaper and more easily available. For example synthetic flavoring replaced lime juice. There was a new scientific way to produce citric acid by chemical means. This was quicker and cheaper.
- 2.** There was strong competition from the East: the East Indian islands and Zanzibar gave the spice island of Grenada stiff competition while the Gold Coast's cacao production stifled Trinidad's success that she enjoyed in the 1920's.
- 3.** Plant diseases such as fungi and pests that affected the crop for which they had no solution. Panama and leaf spot disease plagued the bananas while witch

broom attacked the cacao.



Leaf spot disease



A Panama diseased trunk on the right

4. The Caribbean region is prone to a number of natural disasters such as hurricanes and droughts which can wipe out an entire harvest.
5. The small farmers experienced their own set of problems:
 - (a) The planters used their influence over the local assemblies to pass unfair legislation against the emerging peasantry in a bid to crush them.
 - (b) Many of the peasants were located in the rural areas where there was a woeful lack of infrastructure such as good roads to travel on to the markets
 - (c) Banks were prejudiced in their loan approvals. They were unwilling to lend money to the peasants
 - (d) Unfortunately praedial larceny: theft of crops- was something that the peasants had to deal with.