

USE OF SYSTEMIC INSECTICIDES FOR THE CONTROL OF SOME SERIOUS PESTS OF COCONUT.

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Pests of coconut are often difficult to reach by insecticidal sprays and systemic chemicals which could be applied at a convenient height above ground have to be considered. The institute has already recommended Metasystox as a means of control of *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*, the red weevil pest.

Two potential alternatives to metasystox which was temporarily in short supply, were tested out. These are monocrotophos and Dicrotophos. Both gave satisfactory control when injected into the trunks of red weevil infested palms by the standard technique. Neither chemical produced symptoms of phytotoxicity at the concentration employed.

The leaf eating caterpillar, *Nephantis serinopa* was also brought under effective control by trunk injection of monocrotophos. The effect persisted for at least four months and would therefore be capable of controlling a succession of larvae hatching out of layings over a period of time. *N. serinopa* is not

effectively controlled by releases of parasites, and insecticides have to be considered as a means of control. The injection technique with systemic insecticides obviates the risks of spray contamination but raises problems of possible residue accumulation in edible tissues. This aspect needs further study.