EFFECT OF RAINFALL ON INSECT PEST OUT BREAKS IN HIGH GROWN TEA IN SRI LANKA

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Three instances of serious insect pest out breaks, namely, red spider mite (*Oligonychus coffeae*), red slug (*Eterusia aedea cingala*) and white grub (*Holotrichia disparilis*) were recorded at three different locations in 1986. These out breaks were correlated to the distribution of rainfall in those localities. The rainfall distribution in 1986, was fitted against the average rainfall for preceding 10 years (1976-85) in each locality.

Since red spider mite and red slug are seasonal pests and their out breaks occur during dry weather, serious out breaks occured in the two locations, which normally do not exhibit long period of drought. White grub, being a recurrent pest in certain localized areas, its out break is correlated to the rainfall distribution in that locality. It is envisaged that an unusual rainfall distribution in any locality, could be utilized to predict a particular pest out break, in advance. This would help the tea estates to be in readiness with remedial measures.

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