

INTRODUCTION OF THE OIL PALM POLLINATING
WEEVIL, *ELAEIDOBIVS KAMERUNICUS* TO SRI LANKA

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The oil palm, *Elaeis guineensis* Jacq. is the highest yielding of all oil-bearing palms. It was introduced recently to Sri Lanka, where nearly 1,500 ha are cultivated.

In Asia, including Sri Lanka, assisted pollination was required to obtain satisfactory yields. The cost of manual pollination in Sri Lanka in 1986 was over Rs. 2 million. A pollen-feeding weevil, *Elaeidobivus Kamerunicus* Faust. (Col; Curculionidae) was introduced recently as a pollinator (Syed, 1981).

A nucleus culture of *E. Kamerunicus* was imported from Malaysia in December, 1986. The weevil was screened under quarantine for host specificity. It reproduced only in the male flowers of oil palm. Laboratory breeding using a pure culture was carried out.

A consignment of laboratory-bred weevils was released in Kanuany, 1987 at Nakiadeniya Oil Palm Plantation. The weevil established extremely well. New generations were observed at approximately 10 day intervals. Establishment and dispersal of *E. Kamerunicus* from a single release point was monitored in a 100 ha block. After two months, the weevil was established over a radius of more than 1 km from the release site.

The establishment and dispersal of the weevil at 11 other sites have been very satisfactory. The topography of the land, height of the palms and the availability of male flowers affected the rate of spread of the weevil

Reference

Syed R A (1981) Insect pollination of oil palm.
Report of the Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control

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