B-15: Effect of removal of old berries on the damage of coffee berry borer *Hypothenemus hampei* (Ferreri)

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Coffee berry borer, *Hypothenemus hampei* (Ferreri) is the most disastrous pest of coffee in Sri Lanka. The damage level of berries at the harvesting stage is 20% and it is up to 80% when severely infested. Since no alternate host is recorded, removal of remaining berries and crop sanitation in the present season is suggested to reduce the damage level at the next harvest. The effect of removal of old berries on the infestation level of berry borer in one season and its effect on the next season was studied at the Research Station, Matale during the period February 1995 to December 1997. Early maturing Arabica type (var. Catimor) and late maturing Robusta type (var. IMY) coffee varieties were used in this study. Percentage damage by the borer was estimated by selecting 25 coffee plants from each variety. The selected Catimor plantation was 10 years old and IMY plants were 5 years old. Thr berries remaining in the trees after the harvest were kept behind in the first 2 years. In the 3rd year the remaining berries were removed after the main harvest. The percentage damage done by the borer was recorded at monthly intervals.

The Coffee berry borer started to damage 3 months after flowering in both varieties. The percentage damage increased from 7 months after flowering to harvesting in Catimor and from 9 months after flowering to harvesting in IMY. In Catimor, the mean percentage damage done by the borer was 21.0 in both years 1995 and 1996 and it was only 8.6 in 1997. In 1995 and 1996 the mean percentage damage done by the borer was 14.14 and it was only 6.2 % at the harvesting stage in 1997 in IMY.

These results show that the removal of remaining berries from the field reduces the damage level significantly (5%). Further the damage was observed to start increasing at fruit ripening stage and therefore, maximum attention should be paid at this stage to control the pest.