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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

DDI # 1699-77

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

Attached is a response to your query on the spreading of coffee rust to the Central American countries.

A/DDI

Attachment

Date 25 April 1977

FORM 101 USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS

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(22 April 1977)

ER M 77-10276

22 April 1977

SUBJECT: Coffee Rust

Coffee rust (*Hemileia vastatrix*) is probably the worst of the coffee tree diseases and is endemic in a number of countries around the world. Although it has been prevalent in Brazil since 1970, it is under control there and played no part in the disastrous decline in production caused by the 1975 frost or in the soaring coffee prices that followed. Rising prices on the world coffee market during the past month or two, however, have resulted partly from a new outbreak of the disease in Central America.

Rust was unknown in Central America until last December when it appeared in Nicaragua. It has since been reported in Costa Rica and Honduras. Despite a control effort now underway, the disease will almost certainly spread to all the coffee growing areas of Central America, Mexico and probably the Caribbean.

Coffee rust is a fungus that defoliates an infected tree and, if untreated, will destroy the tree in about three years. While the disease is virtually impossible to eradicate, it can be controlled with chemical sprays. Trees can also be replaced with rust-resistant varieties. Properly treated, infected trees will suffer little or no loss of output and the chief economic impact is an increase in production costs. A few farmers may be forced to abandon coffee either because they are marginal producers or because their land is too steep to permit economical spraying by mechanical means. Spraying from the air is not effective because the disease attacks the under side of the leaf.

It is impossible to predict how the new outbreak will affect production in Central America. It probably will slow the growth of production for a few years while farmers become adjusted to their new situation, learn to take the disease seriously, and become proficient in control methods. A

temporary drop in production is possible. Central America and the Caribbean produce nearly 20 percent of the world's coffee and have been steadily increasing their output in recent years. A disruption of this trend will somewhat delay the recovery of world production from the decline caused by the 1975 frost in Brazil and prolong the period during which production will remain below consumption.

Dave -

Executive Registry
77-6983/6

ACTION

at last Monday's
Morning Meeting, Admiral
Trench asked to get
something to Berglund
quickly on the coffee
/ Rust problem. Have
you seen anything on this?

STAT

STAT

20 April 77

14 - 403
Agriculture

15 - 503
NIE

2

EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FOR *Ag. assistance*

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Record

*ER rec'd the attached copy
from [redacted] /DDI. He got
it from [redacted] [redacted] gave
a copy to ES. This is for our files.*

20 April 77

Date

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