

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Before going into actual study of marketing of farm products in Block S4, Sekinchan, the writer feels a general and brief survey of the area is most essential and should therefore be presented. This chapter then examines the following two topics:-

(a) Sekinchan Irrigation Area

(b) Block S4

#### (A) SEKINCHAN IRRIGATION AREA

Under this sub-heading, the following will be considered:

(a) Location

(b) Size

(c) Communications

(d) Agricultural Production and Marketing

(e) Fish Production and Marketing

(f) Livestock Rearing and Marketing

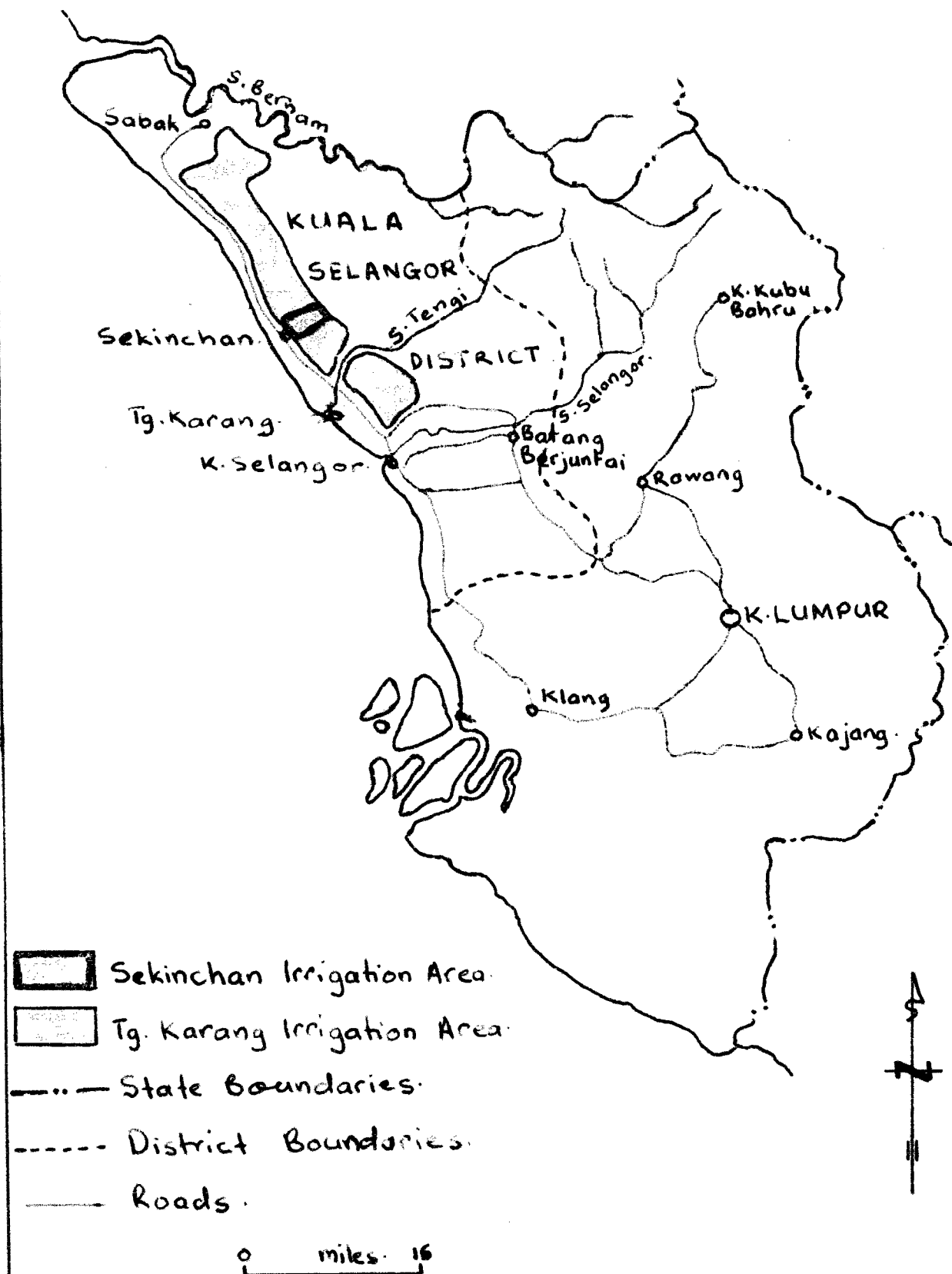
#### Location

Sekinchan Irrigation Area is part of the Tanjong Karang Irrigation Area which is a coastal strip some three miles wide and about 27 miles long, and is bounded by a coastal bund on the west and the main irrigation canal on the east (See Map 1). Just to the north-west of Sekinchan Irrigation Area is Sungai Leman Irrigation Area while to the south-east is Sungai Durong Irrigation Area. As can be seen from Map 2, all these areas are parts of the whole Tanjong Karang Irrigation Area which is in the district of Kuala Selangor, Selangor.

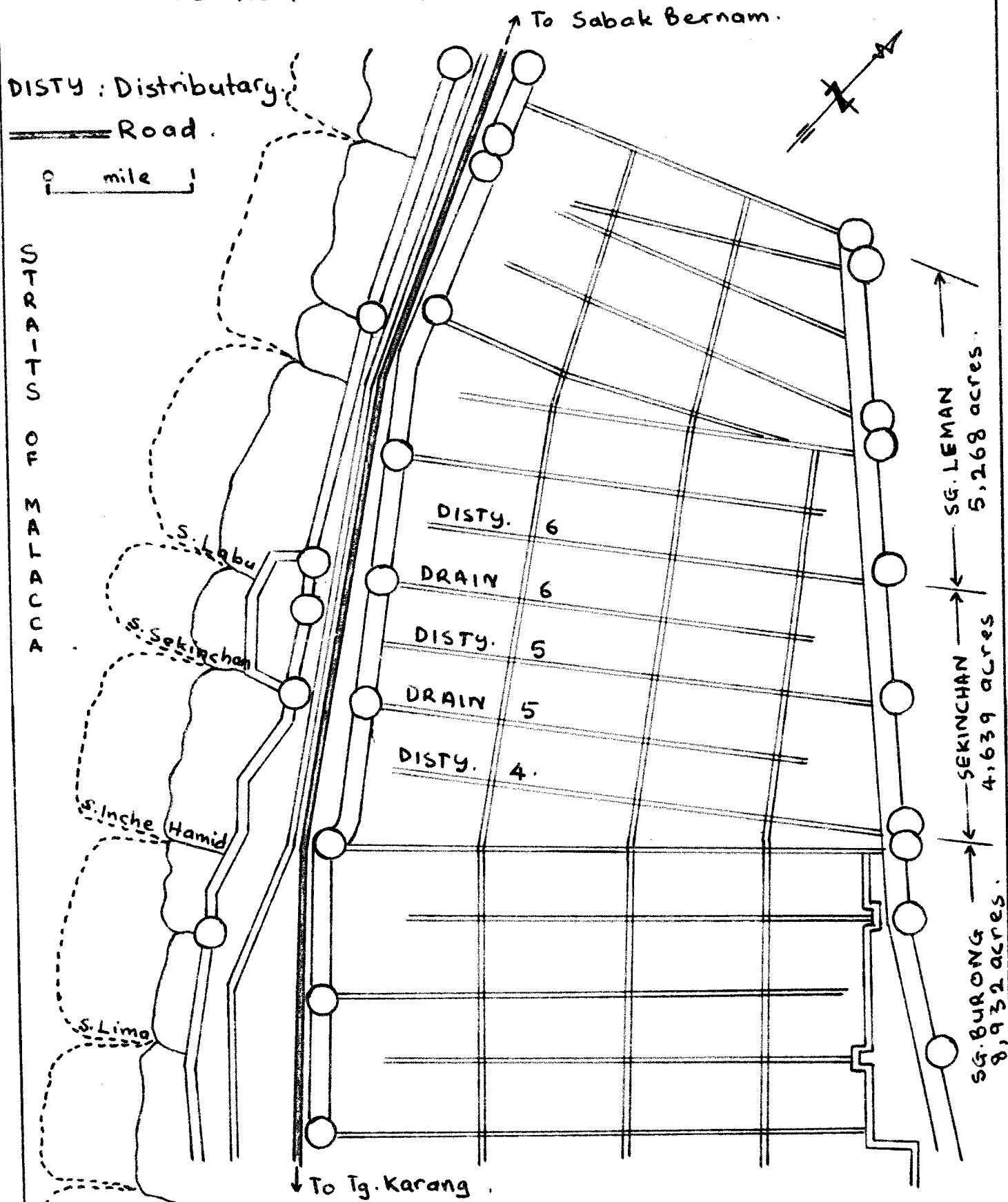
#### Size

The whole of Tanjong Karang Irrigation Area under padi cultivation is about 35,000 acres. This area, together with the Panchang Bedina Irrigation Area brings the total padi area to 50,000 acres.

# MAP 1 : GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF SEKINCHAN IRRIGATION AREA



MAP 2 : SEKINCHAN IRRIGATION AREA IS SHOWN IN A  
PORTION OF TANJONG KARANG IRRIGATION AREA.



0 CM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

The Sekinchan Irrigation Area is only about 4,639 acres.<sup>1</sup> This excludes the Settlement Sites A, B, C and Kampong Bagan, town area and State lands.

Map 3 shows the Sekinchan Irrigation Area with the location of Settlement Sites except Kampong Bagan. This irrigation area is divided into 16 Blocks, beginning with S1 and ending with S16. The size of each Block varies as Map 3 tells us. Table 2.1 shows the number of lots in each Block. Each lot is three acres in size, except those along the drain which are four acres each in size.

TABLE 2.1

NUMBER AND SIZE OF BLOCKS IN SEKINCHAN IRRIGATION AREA

Block No.	Total No. of Lots	Block No.	Total No. of Lots
S1	80	S9	104
S2	80	S10	104
S3	80	S11	104
S4	80	S12	104
S5	104	S13	81
S6	104	S14	91
S7	104	S15	100
S8	104	S16	112

Communications

The construction of drains and distributaries and the main canal in the Sekinchan Irrigation Area resulted in the formation of continuous earth bunds going straight into the heart of the agricultural area. These bunds now form the access arteries of the area, along which produce is brought out for sale. They are now surfaced with either burnt earth or 6" thickness of laterite, the latter having been found more satisfactory than the burnt earth. These bunds, however, are not taken care of, with the result that they are covered with grass save for a narrow path in the middle.

<sup>1</sup>5,100 acres if we include the Kampong Sawah Bund.

The Tanjong Karang-Sabak Bernam Main Road runs in north-west south-east direction parallel to Sekinchan Irrigation Area. It is about half a mile away (See Map 3). In addition there is a tap road which serves particularly Site A and lets above cross bund 3 where it is too far for the produce to be brought to market place or to Sekinchan dealers.

### Agricultural Production and Marketing

Table 2.2 gives the acreage under main padi crop for the years 1960/61, 1961/62, 1962/63, 1963/64 and 1964/65. The last column of the above table shows the average yield per acre. It should be noted that the average yield per acre for the year 1964/65 is only 541 gantangs or about 27 pikuls while in previous years the average yield per acre is above 816 gantangs or 40 pikuls. The reason is that in October<sup>1</sup> 1964, a system of double cropping of padi was introduced for the first time. In other words the first main season padi under double cropping was planted roughly in November 1964 and harvested in March<sup>2</sup> 1965. Under double cropping the average yield per acre (main padi crop) was lower than that under single cropping, although the average yield per acre of the two padi crops combined was much higher than that under single cropping.

Thus the 1964/65 main padi crop was the first main season padi crop under a system of double cropping which was supposed to be planted in November and harvested in late February.

TABLE 2.2

ACREAGE AND AVERAGE YIELDS OF MAIN SEASON PADI CROP FROM 1960/61  
TO 1964/65 - SEKINCHAN

Year	Area Irrigated (acres)	Area Planted (acres)	Average Yield per acre (gantangs)
1960/61	4,000	3,600	850
1961/62	4,639	3,630	900
1962/63	4,639	3,630	824
1963/64	4,639	3,648	816
1964/65	4,639	3,645	541

Source: Agricultural Station, Tanjong Karang.

<sup>1</sup>This was the time for preparing the land according to schedule.

<sup>2</sup>Most farmers did not follow the schedule hence harvesting extended to April.

It is most likely that the acreage and the average <sup>yield</sup> per acre under main padi crop were not much different from that of 1964/65.

From an interview with a D.I.D. inspector, it is gathered that after the first main season padi crop under double cropping many lots above cross bund 2 were not planted with the first off-season padi crop as instructed. Instead, these lots were planted with vegetables, sweet potatoes, yams, maize, etc. until next main padi crop. To them, indeed, the first main season padi crop under double cropping was actually the usual main padi crop under single cropping. Perhaps they had already forecasted that a system of single cropping followed by off-season crops would be much better than two padi crops without off-season crops. So far they could be said to be correct for most of the farmers did not follow the instructions given. If they had followed the instructions regarding the time of preparing the land, the varieties of padi to be planted and others, they would have sufficient time for off-season crops in between the two padi crops. Surely a triple cropping system is better than a single cropping system. Even today most the farmers do not follow the instructions given with the result that not only a triple cropping system,<sup>1</sup> is impossible but also the yields per acre is low.

TABLE 2.3

ACREAGE UNDER OFF-SEASON FROM 1963 - 1965 - SEKINCHAN

Off-season crops	Area planted (acres)		
	1963	1964	1965
Maize	1,900	2,400	1,000
Vegetables	1,800	1,600	900
Sweet Potatoes	740	1,200	10
Tapioca	3,200	3,800	2,000
Keladi (Yams)	1,000	800	80
Chili	420	360	40
Ginger	5	-	-
Tobacco	100	30	8
Groundnuts	64	30	-

Source: Agricultural Station, Tajong Karang.

<sup>1</sup> A handful of farmers were successful in this triple cropping system during the first year of double cropping.

Table 2.3 gives a rough idea of the extent of off-season crops like vegetables etc. grown on padi lots during single cropping and double cropping of padi. In 1964, the farmers could still plant vegetables etc. Since double cropping of padi only started with the main season padi crop of 1964/65, that was roughly between October 1964 and February or March, 1965. In 1965, however, only those farmers who continued with single cropping of padi were able to plant off-season crops like vegetables etc., including but a handful of farmers who follow<sup>ed</sup> the double cropping according to regulation. The majority of them, however did not have sufficient<sup>time</sup> to do so. Thus the area cultivated under off-season crops was greatly reduced compared to that in 1964, occupying mostly lots above cross bund 2.

Most of the farmers (roughly about 90% of the total) operate one lot of three acres each for padi cultivation, while the remainder operate either half lot or more than one lot each. They, normally cultivated the whole lot with a combination of three or four off-season crops, thus a plot of one off-season crop was necessarily very small.

Since marketing must be geared towards the nature of production, the marketing pattern here is typical of the areas with small scale production. It is uneconomic for the farmers to carry their produce and sell it in Kuala Lumpur market since the transport cost forms a larger proportion of total earnings than if they were big producers. It is more economical for them to sell their produce to local dealers who will then bring it to neighbouring towns like Kuala Lumpur, Klang, Kuala Selangor, Tanjong Karang, etc. But then, exploitation may result. In case of padi, it is sold to cooperative rice mill societies ltd. which then take it to big rice mills in Petaling Jaya where it is milled into rice for sale. A detail study of marketing of padi and each of the six selected off-season crops will be presented in subsequent chapters.

### Fish Production and Marketing

Roughly about 90% of fresh water fishing in Sekinchan is only for home consumption while in nearby Malay areas like Sungai Lemau, Sungai Burog and particularly Sungai Besar, fresh water fishing is done on a much greater scale for sale.

In Sekinchan, the farmers seem to be more interested in the production of padi and off-season crops of vegetables, maize, sweet potatoes etc. than in the production of fish. As a result, out of every ten padi lots, there may be only one specially dug sump-pond of a considerable size comparable to Malay areas. However, in almost every lot there is one or two small artificial ponds which may contain fish enough for home consumption. The bigger specially dug sump-ponds are mostly found in lots adjoining the drains.

From field investigation, it is understood that the yield per sump-pond is lower now than during single cropping of padi. The reason given is that under double cropping of padi water can remain

in the padi fields for a shorter period than before. The yield varies from as low as 40 lbs. to 1,000 lbs. per pond. Most of the fish caught are Sepat Siam (*Trichogaster pectoralis*), the others are Keli (*Clarias batrachus*) and Haruan (*Ophiosephalus striatus*). They are caught just before harvesting or soon after.

Since fish production for sale is engaged by only about 10% of the farmers, it is decided that the marketing of fish is not to be studied in detail. It suffices to mention here the pattern of fish marketing and the prices of dried salted Sepat Siam.

Fish caught on large scale are sold mostly to Sekinchan dealers<sup>1</sup> (at present two) who then take it to Kuala Lumpur, Telok Anson, Klang, Kuala Selangor, Seremban and other towns by lorry. It should be noted in passing that these dealers do not only buy fish, but also deal in other farm products like vegetables, maize, etc. produced in Sekinchan. Ikan Sepat Siam are sold in dried and salted form while Ikan Keli and Haruan are sold alive. Farmers usually carry the fish to dealers' shop by bicycle or motor-cycle. Dried, salted Ikan Sepat are put in bamboo baskets while Ikan Keli and Ikan Haruan are put in separate zinc boxes provided by the dealers. At the shops, Ikan Sepat are graded into big variety and small variety.

About 60% of Sepat Siam caught are of big variety. Occasionally fish, like vegetables, are sold to Kuala Lumpur wholesalers/retailers through local agents who may at other times act as merchants. Some of Ikan Keli and Haruan caught from small artificial ponds are also brought to Sekinchan market place for sale.

TABLE 2.4  
PRICES OF SEPAT SIAM (SALTED AND DRIED) SOLD IN SEKINCHAN  
IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH, 1966

Variety of Sepat Siam	Prices Variation (¢ per kati)	Price at Producers' level (¢ per kati)	Price at Local Dealers' level (¢ per kati)	Gross profit made by Local Dealers (¢ per kati)
Big	Maximum	60	65	5
	Minimum	30	33	3
	Normal	40	44	4
Small	Maximum	50	55	5
	Minimum	25	28	3
	Normal	30	34	4

<sup>1</sup> Also they buy fish coming from nearby Malay areas.



## Livestock Rearing and Marketing

Some of the farmers besides planting padi and cultivating off-season crops of vegetables, sweet potatoes etc. also rear ducks, hens, pigs etc. However, most of the poultry (including duck) and/or pig rearers are not padi planters <sup>but</sup> are most likely to cultivate some vegetables, sweet potatoes, tapioca, yams, kankong and bananas both for sale and for feeding the livestock. From what was observed during the Farm Census Survey, pig rearing and poultry raising often go together, though <sup>there</sup> are cases where a person specializes only in pig rearing. If he specializes in pig rearing or if he raises some pigs, ducks or hens, then he is most likely to be a non-padi cultivator. But if he raises some ducks or hens, then he may operate a lot or half a lot of padi land to supplement his income.

If the writer were allowed to make a very rough estimate<sup>1</sup> of the number of houses engaged in pig rearing and/or poultry (including ducks) raising, then it would be between 4% to 8% of the total houses in Sekinchan. That is to say, out of total 1,060 houses in the Sites A, B, C and Kampong Bagan, only between 42 to 85 houses are engaged in pig rearing and /or poultry raising.

From the above description it is clear that livestock rearing is only a small family scale in back yards. Due to the fact that livestock rearing is engaged only by a small percentage of the farmers, it is decided not to study it in detail. It suffices here to mention the general marketing pattern followed and the prices of one type of livestock, to give an illustration.

Livestocks are sold in the following manner:-

- (a) To local dealers who will then take them to Kuala Lumpur, Klang, Telok Anson etc.
- (b) To dealers coming from Kuala Lumpur and other towns.
- (c) Through local agents.
- (d) To consumers in Sekinchan (ducks, hens) in which case the farmers will have to bring them on bicycle either to market place or to shopkeepers.
- (e) To pork stalls in Sekinchan (pigs).

According to one poultry farmer the price per kati is higher if sold to dealers coming from neighbouring towns than that offered by local dealers. This will be so since one level of merchant middlemen is bypassed.

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<sup>1</sup> This rough estimate is based on the writer's general observation when carrying out Farm Census Survey.

TABLE 2.5

PRICES OF HEN, DUCK AND GOOSE SOLD IN SEKINCHAN IN MARCH, 1966

Types of Livestock	Price Variation	Price (\$ per kati) at		Gross profit by Local Dealers (\$ per kati)
		Producers' level	Local Dealers' level	
Hen	Maximum	1.70	2.10	40
"	Minimum	1.30	1.50	20
"	Normal	1.60	1.90	30
Goose	Maximum	1.20	1.60	40
"	Minimum	1.00	1.20	20
"	Normal	1.10	1.40	30
Duck	Maximum	1.00	1.40	40
"	Minimum	0.80	1.00	20
"	Normal	0.90	1.20	30

**B) BLOCK S4**

Under this sub-heading, the following will be considered:

- (a) Choice of A Block Study
- (b) Location
- (c) Size
- (d) Communications
- (e) Structure of agriculture
- (f) Fish Production
- (g) Selected Commodities for Detail Study.

**Choice of A Block Study**

Three of us were given this topic, "Aspects of Marketing from Producers' Perspective" for our graduation exercise. But each was given a separate block to study; the blocks being S2, S3 and S4. The writer was allocated S4. The reasons for the choice of these blocks are that they are nearest to our temporary residence and that most of the operators of these blocks are staying either in Site B, or Site C which can be reached without much

difficulty. The choice of these blocks does not in any way distort the picture of marketing system of padi and other produce in Sekinchan to any appreciable extent except that the vegetables etc. produced in S15, S14, S16 and S13 are taken by lorry from fields or Site A rather than the farmers bringing their produce to market place or to dealers' shops in Sekinchan town as in case of S2, S3 and S4. In short, the general marketing pattern, even more so the marketing problems faced by farmers, would be the same no matter from which blocks the products come. Indeed this block study is meant to simplify the work but at no sacrifice of essential detail.

### Location

Block S4 is about a quarter of a mile from Site B and about a mile from the writer's temporary residence and Sekinchan town. It is about half a mile from the Tanjong Karang-Sabak Bernam main road by the tap road.

Block S4 is situated by the side of the tap road running from Tanjong Karang-Sabak Bernam main road to Site A and the main canal. In fact it is bounded by the tap road and drain 5 on the north-west, cross bund 1 on the north-east, distributing 4 on the south-east and water course on the extreme south-west.

### Size

Block S4 is 60.8 chains long and 41.6 chains wide. There are altogether 80 lots most of which are 10 x 3 chains or 3 acres in size.

### Communications

Block S4 is bounded on all sides by paths and a tap road. Except for the latter, the others are not passable by vehicles like lorries or trucks, though they serve motor-cycles and bicycle quite well. It is difficult to say whether these paths have been surfaced with laterite or burnt earth (most probably the latter) since the maintenance (or the surfacing?) is so very poor that they are almost covered with grass. There is yet another path cutting through the middle of the block, serving particularly the two middle rows of lots. The bridges over the water course in the extreme south-west are not well looked after with the result that one or two bridges are no longer of any use.<sup>1</sup>

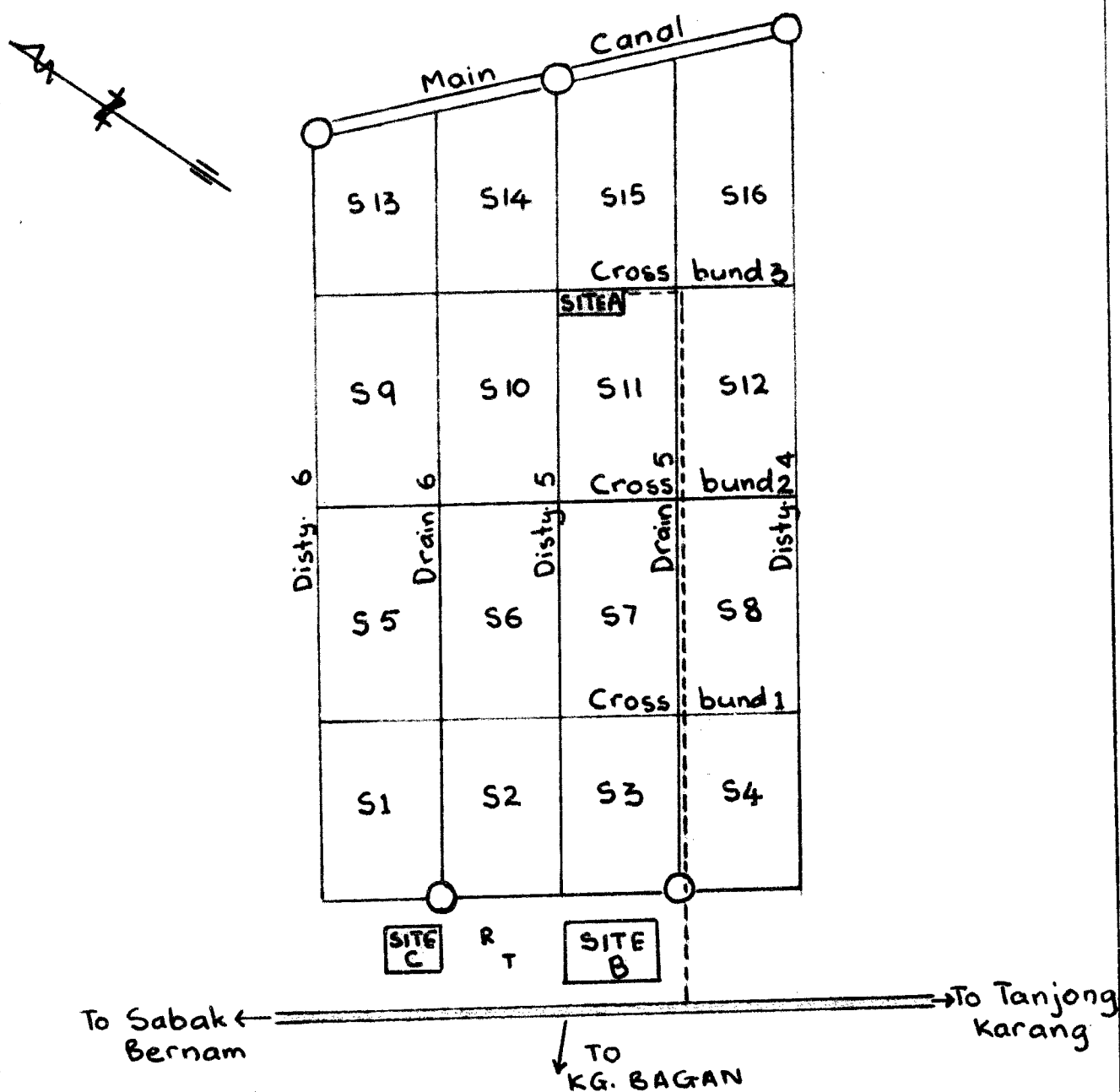
### Structure of Agriculture

From field investigation it is known that the whole of Block S4 followed the system of double cropping since it was introduced in October 1964. Since then, no off-season crops of vegetables etc. were grown in between the two padi crops, though this triple cropping was followed by few lots above cross bund 2. As a result, this

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<sup>1</sup> Even the others, the farmers seldom use them for fear they will collapse.

# MAP 3 : SEKINCHAN IRRIGATION AREA AND THE SETTLEMENT SITES.



Block Surveyed.

Road

Tap Road

0 Chains 64

Disty. : Distributary

T : Sekinchan Town

R : Writer's Temporary Residence.

0 CM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

MAP 4

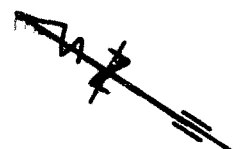
BLOCK S4 SHOWING THE LOTS COVERED IN THE SURVEY

10438	10458	10478	10498
10439	10459	10479	10499
10440	10460	10480	10500
10441	10461	10481	10501
10442	10462	10482	10502
10443	10463	10483	10503
10444	10464	10484	10504
10445	10465	10485	10505
10446	10466	10486	10506
10447	10467	10487	10507
10448	10468	10488	10508
10449	10469	10489	10509
10450	10470	10490	10510
10451	10471	10491	10511
10452	10472	10492	10512
10453	10473	10493	10513
10454	10474	10494	10514
10455	10475	10495	10515
10456	10476	10496	10516
10457	10477	10497	10517



Lots covered in the survey.

0 Chains 8



survey was based on the off-season crops grown in 1964, that was between roughly between April and October of that year. The off-season crops grown here before double-cropping were very much the same as in other parts of Sekinchan Irrigation Area. The common types were chili, long beans, ladies finger, pumpkin, maize, sweet potatoes, cucumber, spinach mustard, Chinese cabbage, amaranthus, soya beans, green grain and yams.

### Fish Production

Fish production on a commercial scale concerns only a handful of farmers. Majority of them have only one or two small artificial ponds in their lots for home consumption. For this reason, it is decided not to treat it in any detail.

### Selected Commodities for Detail Study

The commodities selected for this survey were padi, chili, long beans, ladies finger, pumpkin, maize and sweet potatoes. They were chosen not only on the basis of popularity but also with a view to represent all the important categories of farm products produced in Sekinchan.