



Quality coffee from Mareeba

MAREEBA coffee estates outside Mareeba is one of only four large-scale Australian coffee plantations to come into production since the early part of this century. The estates comprise of a 44.55 ha plantation of which 40.5 ha will be planted with up to 240,000 coffee trees.

Dick and Nat Jacques already have more than 90,000 coffee trees producing a very high quality coffee bean.

The brothers migrated to Australia with their wives from Tanzania where their parents have farmed coffee plantations for years.

They still have considerable holdings in East Africa, but there they use all manual labor.

That is where the similarity between the farms in Africa and the one here in North Queensland ends.

Dick and Nat have

all but automated their property. They can, with the help of their wives, run the whole operation by themselves.

They have a fully automatic irrigation and fertilising system which services each individual tree.

The plantation has a watering system timer and master switch-board; a harvester worth \$70,000 purchased from New Zealand and modified for use in the coffee plantation; and a tractor modified to make the job of weed control much easier and quicker.

The only other country to employ mechanical harvesting is Brazil.

Estimated production of the Tableland plantation will be about 150,000 kg a year with another 100,000 to 150,000 kg coming from the other plantation, Dick said.

The Jacques brothers will be endeavoring to produce a high quality product and will be growing only Arabic coffee trees which are a very high quality variety.

In the future the Jacques hope to open their own properties to

the public and organise tours through their establishments — along the same lines as the Nerada Tea Estates of Innisfail.

Coffee previously has been a profitable industry on the Atherton Tableland.

Between 1900 and 1930 it was considered to be very high quality bean from this area on the London Commodities Market.

But frosts destroyed a major part of these coffee plantations which were situated at Kuranda.

The Mareeba coffee plantations are on high frost-free land.

• Mariolyn and Linda Jacques were pictured while sorting coffee beans. The coffee from the plantation has been described by an independent analyst as among the finest in the world. — Francis photo.

Story and photos by Russell Francis.



• Nat and Dick Jacques are pictured with the tractor which was modified to make the job of weed control on their coffee plantation easier and quicker. — Francis photo.



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SITUATED AT
FAMOUS
4 MILE BEACH,
QUEENSLAND