THE EFFECT OF ADDITIONS OF NITROGEN ON THE DECOMPOSITION OF SUGAR CANE TRASH UNDER FIELD CONDITIONS

MADISON B. STURGIS

Sugar cane trash is the material left on the surface of the ground after harvesting sugar cane and consists of all the leaves and the upper immature part of the stalk. In 1930 there were 184,000 acres of sugar cane harvested in Louisiana which gave an average yield of 17.0 tons of mill cane and 8.3 tons of trash per acre. This trash crop contained 40 pounds of combined nitrogen per acre. It also contained 2,800 pounds of hydrolyzable carbohydrates which have the potential capacity of inducing the fixation of 26 pounds of nitrogen per acre through the stimulation of nitrogen-fixing forms of the

1Contribution from the Department of Soils, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Baton Rouge, La. Also presented before Section O of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at New Orleans, Louisiana, December 29, 1931. Published with the approval of the Director of the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Stations. Received for publication January 16, 1932.

2Assistant Soil Technologist. The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to W. G. Taggart for many valuable suggestions and for supervision of the field work, to W. P. Denson for assistance with the analytical work in the beginning, and to Dr. P. M. Horton for helpful criticisms and suggestions given in the progress of the investigations.