

Black Pepper Price Soars From Dime To 60 Cts. A Can; Listed Strategic Material

By RADER WINGET

NEW YORK—(AP)—The wholesale prices of most foods are more than double prewar, but black pepper has gone up 47 times.

The retail price has jumped too, but less spectacularly. The housewife at her grocery now pays about 60 cents for the prewar dime can of black pepper, the common kind you use at home.

In 1939 the lowest price for black pepper was three cents a pound wholesale. It hit an all-time peak of \$1.42 a pound early last August, and it isn't very far from that now.

The situation is potentially explosive, pepper men say. It's something like a man screwing up his face to sneeze. He wrinkles his nose, takes a deep breath—and everybody waits.

Back in 1939, we imported some 30,000 tons of pepper, mostly from India and Indonesia. Pepper that year averaged four cents a pound. The war upset all that. Imports were erratic. In 1943 we imported only eight tons. The next year not even a shaker full ran the blockade to get in.

Such shortages boosted the price until OPA put a ceiling of ten cents a pound on black pepper. That lasted until early 1946, when the lid was lifted. Pepper jumped from an average of ten cents in 1945 to an annual average

of 39 cents, to 43 cents, and to an average of 62 cents last year. This year it has moved steadily upward to its current high plateau.

Plant Matures in 7 Years

The end of the war and higher prices didn't increase the pepper supply. In prewar days Indonesia produced 90 per cent of the world's pepper. But the Japanese wrecked the pepper gardens during their occupation. After they were thrown out, the Indonesians started rebuilding their industry. That's slow work. It takes about seven years for a domestic pepper plant to mature. And the work was delayed or halted from time to time by civil strife.

As a result, India took pepper leadership and turned out 80 per cent of world production. Adding to the uncertainty was the American government's decision that pepper is a strategic war material in critical supply. It was marked for stockpiling. Such operations are top secret, but government buying always is a potential market factor to keep the price from sagging.

Indonesia Big Question
The big, uncertainty is Indonesia, once the world's biggest producer. Some of New York's most important pepper traders have their agents in Indonesian ports where they gather all the information they can on pepper for their companies.

But they don't know, they say, what the situation is in the interior. Travel is difficult throughout the country and information is restricted. Some believe there may be large stocks of pepper there harvested from gardens that escaped notice. Others think there may be some stocks concentrated from harvests of wild pepper plants or from abandoned gardens.

If large stocks were uncovered, or if shipments from Indonesia should start suddenly, it would have a dramatic effect on the pepper situation.

All of these uncertainties have made pepper buyers here cau-



PRIZE HAM—Roland Anderson, 15, of Leland, Ill., shows the 225-pound Poland China hog that won the junior grand championship in the 4-H feeding contest at the 50th International Livestock Show in Chicago. The hog is one of 10,000 animals from 30 states exhibited in the biggest farm show on earth.

Texas Steer Captures Grand Champion Honors

CHICAGO.—(AP)—A junior yearling Hereford, "Judge Roy Bean," shown by the Pecos county 4-H club, Fort Stockton, Tex., was named grand champion steer of the 1949 international livestock show here.

The reserve champion is Chino 906, also a Hereford, weighing 750 pounds, compared with 1,250 pounds for the grand champion. The reserve is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sears, owners of the Chino farms at Church Hill, Md. The steer is a junior calf.

"Judge Roy Bean" was paraded through the judging ring by W. T. Posey, county agent at Fort Stockton, Tex. Posey said the steer was fattened to top grade by 43 boys and seven girls, members of the Pecos county club.

New Product May Boost Housewife, Apple Grower

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—(AP)—A brand new product may soon be on the market that will make every day Thanksgiving day for both the housewife and the apple grower.

The National Research corporation has announced formation of a company to manufacture frozen apple juice concentrate at a pilot plant now under construction in West Concord.

National research is the outfit that put a frozen orange juice concentrate on the market in 1946.

Freezing and concentrating apple juice is a new idea, according to Richard S. Morse, national research head.

Grand Champion Steer Brings \$5.00 A Pound

CHICAGO.—(AP)—Bonnie Lu Logan got \$5.00 a pound for her 1,330-pound junior grand champion steer at the international livestock show here broke all price records for the junior animal. The previous top was \$4.50, set in 1936.

Last year's junior grand champion steer, sold for only \$2.50 a pound.

Pretty, blonde Bonnie Su, 15, of Van Wert, O., and her blonde girl friend, Betty Jo Vogt, 15, also of Van Wert, paraded the Aberdeen-angus, Lin-Lo, around a tense auction ring.

FARMERS HAVE RADIOS

More than three-fourths of all farm families in America now have radios and sewing machines, says T. Wilson Longmore of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

"Apparently farm people regard these two items as necessities, or of first importance in family life today," he says. "Ranking close, because more than half of all farm families report them, are: magazines, daily or weekly newspapers, electricity, births in hospitals, all-weather roads, automobiles and self-heating irons."

Less than half, but more than one-fourth of all farm families

own them. They are described as being on a hand-to-mouth basis.

One pepper trader made a quick windfall profit from the rise right in his own office. All traders keep samples of shipments. So he gathered up a few old samples of shipments made when pepper was around a dime, and sold the lot for \$131.25.

Congress Will Be Asked To Define 'Family' Farm

WASHINGTON.—(AP)—Congress probably will be asked next year to write a new description of the "family size" farm.

That seems to be the reclamation bureau to be the import of President Truman's comment in vetoing the bill to waive the excess land provisions of the reclamation law for part of Colorado's San Luis valley project.

Mr. Truman said Congress should consider amending the law "so as to authorize appropriate adjustments in maximum acreages, where necessary, under carefully worked out standards, which could be applied not only to the San Luis valley project but also to other projects in which some adjustments may be warranted."

"I think the language of the President's veto message indicates Congress must set up new, specific standards to meet new conditions we are encountering in the West," said E. D. Eaton, assistant director of the bureau's operations and maintenance branch.

When the reclamation law was enacted, in 1902, it provided that no settler could own more than 160 acres or a husband and wife more than 320 acres of irrigable land. Detailed studies had fixed that area as sufficient for the support of a farm family on public lands then considered susceptible of irrigation development.

Congress has waived that provision for only three projects: the Truckee river storage and Humboldt projects in Nevada and the Colorado Big Thompson,

New Poultry Equipment Described in Bulletin

Plans and illustrations of various pieces of equipment needed for efficient management of the poultry flock are presented in a new O.S.C. agricultural experiment station circular, "Poultry House Equipment." The authors are W. T. Cooney, associate poultry husbandman, and H.R. Sinar, agricultural engineer.

Good poultry house equipment increases labor efficiency, helps cut poultry losses and aids in getting maximum production of high quality eggs and poultry meat, the authors point out. Equipment outlined in the publication has been designed to meet the needs of most Oregon poultry farms and has proved satisfactory under commercial conditions.

"Poultry House Equipment" is the last of a series of three publications on building and equipping the poultry house. The first two publications dealt with plans for construction of a conventional single-story poultry laying-house designed for flocks of 500 to 1000 birds and of a two-story poultry house designed to accommodate 100 to 2000 birds. Copies of all publications are available free.

Under forest management, it is possible to take a harvest from the woods and still leave a growing forest.

In Colorado, it has refused several times to expand the farm unit measure on other projects.

There has been opposition to expansion of the farm unit from Congressman from reclamation states and protest from reclamation leaders throughout the west.

Auction Brings \$4.50 For Boxes Of Apples

YAKIMA.—(AP)—A carload of apples packed during the international apple packing contest here Nov. 19 sold on the New York auction for an average of \$4.15 a box.

Contest officials cheered the news received by teletype from Victor Joseph, president of the International Apple association. They said the price was a dollar higher than the market.

Joseph, who was here to crown the world champion apple packer, sparked the sale by draping the car with flags. A band of stevedores played an hour-long concert before the auction opened.

Dairy Products Prices Drop Considered Likely

WASHINGTON.—(AP)—Prices of dairy products will be some what lower next year unless the purchases are increased materially over 1949 levels, the agriculture department says.

As for the rest of December, the department's monthly dairy situation report said little change would occur in these prices. Total milk flow, it said, is running

larger than a year ago, and sizable purchases of manufactured products are still being made for price support.

Man learned how to make paper from wood by watching the wasp.

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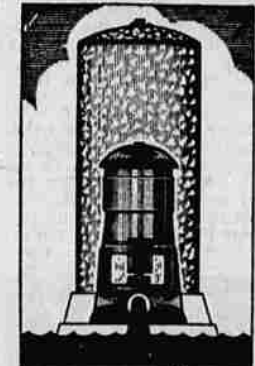


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