

The Lush Meadows Celery Product Advertises Willamette Valley

Cooperative Union With Active Sales Manager One Reason For Success of This Crop—Meadow Brand Celery Now Known All Over Nation—Stock Exported Is Carefully Selected—Cost of Production High But Prices Justify It—Land Is Perfectly Adapted To This Crop—Reclaimed Lake Bottom Requires No Irrigation for Roots But Top Sprinkling Helpful—Much Labor Required Both In Planting and Tending, and in Harvesting—Constant Cultivation Necessary—Growing Period Unusually Long—Brooks Gaining Fame As Home of Celery

Broader Marketing Plan Is Considered for 1927

Starting With a Few Crates Shipped Ten Years Ago, Industry Has Grown Until 400 Carloads Were Exported in Last Season—Succeeds Even in Competition.

By CECIL V. ASHBAUGH

Among the industries of the Salem district whose output advertises Western Oregon and especially this immediate neighborhood must be included the raising and distributing of the famous Meadow Brand celery.

Beginning with a few crates which were introduced to the north and middle western markets successfully about 10 years ago, it has grown to an enterprise which moved during the season ending December 12, slightly over 400 carloads, 20 of which moved by express in small orders, some 20 by trucks distributed by the local fruit companies and the remainder under ice to distant markets.

This was sold in 25 different states including Massachusetts and Florida, often in direct competition with local stock, creditably holding its own even when the high freight rate and refrigeration charge was added to the selling price.

So excellent has its quality become that all the railroads touching the Willamette valley and Portland serve it in their diners and hotels and advertise it on their menus, not only as Oregon celery but as Lake Labish celery.

The growers of this product early saw the advantages of cooperative marketing, especially when it was known that a hard thing to equal had been produced, so a union was formed called the Labish Meadows Celery Union which now boasts 31 members.

Market Cooperatively
Three years ago the union, by vote, decided that it had grown large enough to have a sales manager and Ronald E. Jones was elected to that position. He at once entered into the selling end of the business with such zeal and enthusiasm that today L. M.

C. U. celery is known wherever celery is talked.

And, although the growers have done their best to bring out a product beyond criticism, their manager has aided them by rigid inspection to pack, cull and trim and put into their crates only such stock as would be called No. 1 on any market.

The question is often asked, "How much is there in it for the grower?" or "Is it profitable?" These questions are difficult to answer directly, as a great many conditions enter to make or lose money for the grower. Like any other product of the soil much can go wrong; but with things normal an average per acre might be taken as follows:

Rent and improvements for the valuable land upon which it is grown, \$100; fertilizers, including both chemical and animal, \$200; crates, paper and binding tape, \$90; lumber for bleaching about 20,000 ft. which is good for from 4 to 6 years when taken care of, estimated at \$80 per acre per year. The item of labor is difficult to estimate but roughly may be put at \$200 per acre. Other incidentals will bring this total to near \$700.

On the other side of the book from an acre of such treated land the unbelievable amount of 37 crates may be cut which market at \$250 per crate net, although a higher figure is often obtained. A conservative net profit to the grower may be placed at \$175.

Land Perfectly Adapted
Rehearsing these items a few interesting facts are shown:

First, the land could not be better adapted to celery culture if it had been created exclusively for that purpose. It is as fertile as ground can be naturally, being reclaimed lake land where years of rotted vegetation and

HARVESTING CELERY



Indicating the prolific growth of this valuable crop on Labish Meadows, ideal region for celery production

silt have accumulated. It is always moist below the surface—celery being a water loving plant and growing in its native habitat along water courses—and in the driest times no irrigation would be necessary for the roots, but a top sprinkling from the numerous drainage ditches of cool water adds a quick growth and crispness.

This land also grows almost any vegetable well and is in great demand, hence the high rent, although not beyond its worth or return.

The fertilizers as applied by individuals vary greatly. The base is stock-yard or barn-yard or ten sheep guano from eastern Oregon.

For later forcing potashes and sodas are often used, the amounts applied depending upon conditions and this is a study in itself.

Labor Is Chief Item

Labor is the chief item, after all, as this crop requires almost constant attention. The tiny seeds, so small that it requires 25 of them placed end to end to make an inch, are planted in beds of specially prepared soil sifted and fertilized to a nicety.

The seeders used are the common variety of salt shaker as a very small amount of the seed is required, and which, though al-

most as valuable as gold dust, does not average in cost more per acre than most other seed on account of the amount of ground it will cover.

So thin a layer of earth is required to bury the seed that it will dry out in a few hours, so to prevent this moist burlap is placed over the beds and frequently sprinkled until the small plants have sufficient roots to draw their moisture from the deeper soil.

If, as in case of the very early planting, the sprouting beds are in hothouses or under glass, the tiny plants are re-set after a few days and are later put outside for toughening which is a gradual process. When all danger of freezing is past they are again transplanted, this time where they will live to maturity.

The rows are drawn by strings and are accurately spaced apart 32 inches while the plants are set from five to eight inches apart in the row. Before this final planting is done the ground must be in perfect shape and thoroughly soaked in the rows where the plants are to be set.

From then on it is constant care and cultivation for weeds love this environment quite as well as celery and thrive accordingly. Labor enters into sprinkling and into spraying for pests and fungus; also in placing the boards at bleaching time which is generally about 18 to 20 days before cutting.

Harvesting Large Task

Labor again enters when cutting time is on for it takes a small army to cut, sort, trim and pack, and move the finished crates. For the carload shipments which are often stored or distributed from eastern houses what is called "field-pack" is used. This is packed in the crates in the field at the time of cutting and is placed tops all up.

The weight runs about 130 to 150 pounds and these contain from three to six dozen depending upon the size of the stalks. The express shipments are trimmed closer and are bunched in dozen packages, every other one being reversed so that considerable more celery can be contained in the crate, generally from six dozen in the larger sizes to 12 dozen, the popular sizes being eight and tens. These make an attractive saleable pack, being tied neatly with blue tape and wrapped with parchment paper having upon it the Meadow Brand label and grower's number.

The crates themselves are of Oregon fir from the local mills and are assembled near where they are to be used.

The market and demand on the one hand and blight, slugs, rot and many other things of a depressing nature on the other make celery growing a gamble differing little from other agricultural pursuits, but when all goes fairly well the grower gets a very fair return for his labor and investment.

Growing Period Long

The first cutting of celery is about the middle of June. This goes by express to points as far east as Minnesota and to many of our northern cities. About August the carload shipping begins which increases to the peak about the first of November.

Fortunately freezing weather is almost unknown here in November although some very heavy frosts are experienced. These do not materially hurt the celery although too many might of it in succession will result in a yellow leaf.

The shipping points in the past have been Quincy and Brooks, but the crates bear the Brooks address and that place is generally known as the home of the Labish celery. From this mark the union receives many letters from various sources asking for information and complimenting the quality of the celery.

The program for the year 1927 is not complete at present as the manager expects to visit several of the larger buyers in Minneapolis, Omaha, Chicago and other points sometime in January and

a broader marketing arrangement will be mapped out, but it will be safe to say that more and better celery will be grown which will mean more fame for this product and more money to the growers.

STOCKS HIGHER THAN YEAR AGO TREND STEADILY UPWARD SINCE SUMMER OF 1924

NEW YORK, Dec. 31—(AP)—Despite one of the severest reactions in stock exchange history last March, and indications of a slowing down in some major lines of business in 1927, the general level of stock prices at the close of the year is well above that at the end of 1925. Bond prices have risen to the highest levels since 1913. In both the bond and stock markets, the total volume of business in 1926 was slightly below that of 1925.

The major trend of stock prices has been upward since the early summer of 1924, although the big "bull" movement did not get under way until after the presidential election that year. At the beginning of 1926 prices were rising and continued that way, with a few minor interruptions, until late in February when a heavy liquidating movement started, culminating in the disastrous March break which reduced quoted values of listed securities several billion dollars in the aggregate.

Alternate periods of weakness and strength characterized the late spring markets, with a rather definite upward tendency apparent again by early summer. This continued until the early fall when another sharp reaction took place. In the closing months of the year prices started to climb again, the industrial average touching the highest level ever recorded in the last month of the year.

While it is generally conceded that the trend of business and money rates undoubtedly will determine the movement of security prices in 1927, predictions of bankers and other competent observers of market conditions are more qualified than usual at this season of the year, indicating widespread uncertainty. Those committed to the cycle theory of business and market trends naturally look for a downward readjustment of values while others see nothing in fundamental conditions that would warrant a general recession, although admitting that irregularities may develop in certain lines.

Three principal sources of uneasiness are: 1, the huge volume of bank funds invested in securities; 2, the rapid growth of installment buying, and 3, the low price of commodities, particularly cotton. Inability of business and commercial channels to absorb the huge imports of gold within the last few years, necessitating the employment of funds derived from its sale in the securities markets, is believed to be responsible for the gigantic investment of banks in stocks and bonds. While methods of financing installment purchases undoubtedly have been improved and strengthened in the last year or two, the extensive use of this method particularly in the purchase of motor cars, radios and other luxuries, is regarded as a source of danger in some quarters, and it is generally conceded that the real test of the system will not come until the country enters a period of general depression. The decline in commodity prices is feared largely because of its adverse effect on purchasing power, particularly in the agricultural regions.

Favorable factors in the situation as the year draws to a close are: an abundance of credit at relatively low rates; comparatively low inventories, resulting largely from so-called "hand to mouth" buying and quick and efficient transportation, increasing industrial efficiency, especially through the more general use of labor and time saving devices; absence of any serious labor disputes and a

SETTING YOUNG CELERY PLANTS



One of the operations which makes labor a big item in the production of celery. Throughout, constant attention and care is necessary to the successful raising of this crop.

generally high rate of employment, and gradual economic rehabilitation abroad.

On the other side of the ledger are: a slowing down in steel production and building construction; the low price of cotton; increasing foreign competition; the relatively low margin of profit in many industries, and the large volume of brokers' loans.

Steel shares, as a group, failed to make much progress. U. S. Steel, common, however, soared to the highest price ever recorded in the closing weeks of the year in reflection of unusually heavy peace-time earnings and the declaration of the long-awaited 40 per cent stock dividend, a \$200,000,000 "melon." Earlier in the year the stock had definitely been placed on a \$7 annual basis. It is expected in Wall Street that the same dividend will be maintained on the additional stock. Dividends on the common stock of the Republic Iron & Steel company were restored, after a lapse of five years, and the Crucible Steel dividend was increased from \$4 to \$5 and thence to \$6. Bethlehem Steel common is expected to go on a dividend basis next year.

Oil companies enjoyed unusual prosperity but this was NOT generally reflected in the petroleum stocks. Several false rallies in this group during the past few years, coupled with fears that record breaking crude production this year, would unsettle the price structure and adversely affect next year's earnings, led to rather heavy liquidation by tired and disappointed holders on all rallies. Retirement of the preferred stock of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and the transfer of the common stock of the Standard Oil Company of New York from the Curb market to the "big board" attracted widespread attention.

Establishment of new high traffic and earnings records by Class 1 railroads was mirrored in the general advance in stock prices and interrelated dividends, the raising of the rate of Pennsylvania railroad common being a noteworthy feature. Rejection of the original "Nickel Plate" merger plan by the Interstate Commerce commission and the difficulties encountered in the preparation of a revised plan, together with a general wage increase to eastern trainmen towards the end of the year, tended to keep speculative enthusiasm for the rails in check.

Railroad equipment stocks soared to record high levels, due to the heavy purchase of new equipment by the principal carriers and the more general use of new automatic train control and signal devices. Textile and packing shares lost ground in reflection of poor trade conditions, but they showed signs of marked improvement as the year drew to a close. Record-breaking chain store and mail order sales brought higher prices for stocks of those companies. Amusement, chemical and food shares lacked a definite trend.

Although the production and sale of automobiles broke all records, NOT all automobile stocks shared in this prosperity. The General Motors Corporation's earnings were enormous, exceeding those of the United States Steel Corporation for the first nine months of the year, and they

Housework Called Remedy for "Nerves" by Speaker

LONDON—(AP)—Take a hammer and drive nails, or grab a scrubbing brush and clean up the floor, or do any of the other thousand and one duties about a house and the matter of "nerves" will become something of the past was the advice handed out by Dame Mary Scharlieb to a crowded house of women at the Institute of Hygiene.

"Household work is one of the greatest cures that women may take for nerves," continued Scharlieb who is dean of the British medical women and has been practicing here more than 50 years. "Neurotic girls and women can get the greatest advantage from work; work of any kind. The woman who stays at home is able to occupy herself in a variety of domestic tasks which are beneficial to mind and body alike."

DETROIT TO GET CITY HALL

Detroit's city hall will be replaced by an elaborate structure on the Detroit river as the nucleus of a civic center if plans of Councilman John C. Lodge materializes.

No Bobs in Swedish Opera Owing to Time Elements

STOCKHOLM—(AP)—Only young terschors with long hair will get front row positions at the Royal Opera of Stockholm this season, Mrs. Lisa Steier, the new ballet mistress, has ruled.

"Not because bobs are unbecoming to young girls," she says, "but because most of the opera ante-date the jazz and shingle age and no ballet dancer can gyrate with the same abandon, ease and grace with a wig on her head as with her own natural locks flowing about."

None of the three premier danseuses of the royal opera staff, Ebon Strandin, Sir Osterholm, or Ely Holmberg, have had their hair shorn.

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