

National Potato Letter— Growers Narrowly Escape Return To Price Ceilings

Potato growers and distributors this week narrowly escaped a return to price ceilings. Market strength in both Idaho and Maine carried prices well above ex-cellar levels last week and both OPA and the even more powerful office of economic stabilization were reluctant to continue the ceiling suspension for another month. They finally agreed to the extension, however, with the proviso that they would continue it only so long as retail prices are held below former ceiling levels.

Despite the continued general strength in old stock, prices broke sharply Monday at Florida shipping points after several days of draggy trading. Definite signs of slipping were noted on February 18, and between that date and March 4 prices dropped from \$2.65 per 50-pound sack to \$1.75 to \$1.80, a decline of about \$1.00 per hundred. These are prices on winter new crop potatoes, a specialty crop for which high prices are customary. The price break is difficult to understand in view of the strength in old stock and the fact that Florida production is turning out smaller than last year despite a 23 per cent increase in acreage planted.

Several late areas show a reversal of market conditions in Florida. Maine has had continued good demand and steadily improving prices since February 18. Total advance amounts to about 25 cents per cwt., with a stronger tendency prevailing although prices now are 15 cents over ex-cellar, Idaho was 5 cents over the floor only two weeks ago, now is 15 cents over ex-cellar. Upstate New York, with moderate demand and slightly stronger market, is right on ex-cellar. North Dakota demand continues fair with the market showing a slightly stronger feeling although prices are reported as 10 to 15 cents under floor for very few commercial sales. Colorado also has improved, with a moderate demand, slightly stronger market, and prices 25 cents over the floor, but still 15 cents under ex-cellar. Wisconsin hovers around the floor with sales slightly under to a little over under a slow demand and a market holding about steady. Michigan demand is reported as moderate, market firm, price 5 cents to 10 cents over the floor.

With the exception of Philadelphia, the terminal markets have held steady to slightly stronger for old stock, mostly dull to slightly weaker for new. Philadelphia is reported weaker for both old and new stock. In San Francisco Klamath district Russets held around \$3.35 to \$3.75 for less than car load lots at wholesale.

Movement
Shipments last week advanced sharply to a total of 6654 cars—gain of 912 over the previous week and a daily average of 1109 cars. Comparing totals with last year to this time, adjusted for heavy summer shipments, we are now only about 1350 cars behind instead of the 10,000 or more cars estimated a few months ago. With the heavy loading since cars tightened up, actual tonnage moved probably is considerably ahead of last year, and except for seed shipments, is about what it should be. For the week, Idaho, Maine, Minnesota and North Dakota each advanced about 200 cars with Colorado up about 101 cars, Oregon up 58, and Florida up 59. Smaller changes, with some declines, were noted in other states.

Exports And Surplus Removal
Canada now has received nearly 5000 cars, mostly U. S. No. 1, size A, and mostly from Maine and Michigan. Red River valley now is furnishing most of Canada's requirements although the valley is out of position for most advantageous export to the eastern Canadian provinces which need our potatoes. Shipments were made possible by a change in the deal with Canada which raises the amount of subsidy paid by this country and permits mid-western stock to move farther east than otherwise would be possible. Purchases for France in the valley are temporarily halted and Canada will take all supplies from this area in excess of domestic requirements.

Supplies for France are still arriving at Beaumont, Tex., in considerable volume, but most of these are now coming from Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming, with a few from Idaho and Wisconsin. To-

tal government purchases dropped to 159 cars last week, compared with 204 cars the previous week. Some of these may have been for processing since the Muscatine, Ia., by-products plant is resuming activity. Export deals, plus the 10 million pounds of dehydrated spuds ordered for UNRRA, should about clean up the stored crop. Any leftovers can go to alcohol and glucose, and possibly a few for stock feed. Any way they are used will help take the pressure off of the potato market and the critically short grain supply.

Seed

This is the month for the real demand for seed potatoes. Most of the deep south already has been supplied and seed demand now is mostly from sections planting from April through June. Seed areas report that they are far behind in deliveries, mostly because of car shortages and the weather. Growers usually succeed in getting seed, however, and we believe the intended acreages will be planted although some may be planted a little late and may not have the best seed of the preferred source and variety.

Dry Peas May Be Planted In Klamath Basin

Oregon farmers are called upon by E. H. Miller, Oregon director of the field service branch, U. S. DA production and marketing administration, to do their part in helping relieve the critical world food situation by making every effort to attain 1946 farm production goals.

Miller has announced a 5000-acre increase in the production goal for dry edible smooth peas, bringing the state goal for this high-energy food crop up to 30,000 acres. Umatilla and Union are the principal dry-pea producing counties, hence meeting the goal will mean that growers in those counties will need to plant almost as many acres as in 1945. There also is a possibility, Miller said, of acreages being planted in Lake and Klamath counties.

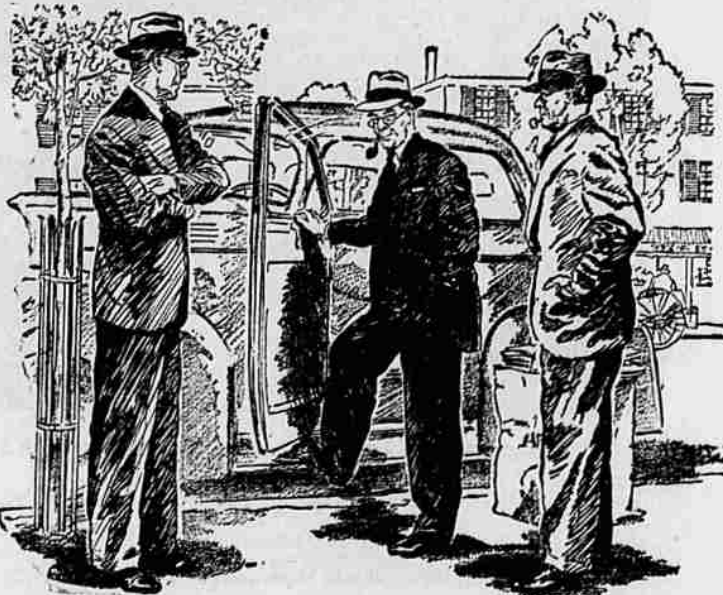
Announcement

An early announcement is expected of a 1946 price support program for dry edible peas at about the 1945 levels of \$4.25 and \$4.50 a hundredweight, the state office has been informed. Citing the tremendous demands on American food to prevent mass starvation in war-devastated countries, the Oregon PMA director asked that production machinery on Oregon's farms and ranches be kept in high gear for another year to meet the 1946 goals. For commodities which still can be affected by spring plantings, the goals call for 3 per cent more wheat than in 1945, 25 per cent more corn, 10 per cent more oats, 7 per cent more barley, 3 per cent more hay, 16 per cent fewer potatoes and the same acreage of sugar beets as last year.

Morse Urges Eugene Flood Control Plan

WASHINGTON, March 15 (AP)—Declaring the city of Eugene "cannot go forward as long as flood danger exists on Amazon creek," Senator Morse (R-Ore.) urged quick senate action on a bill authorizing a flood control project. Morse quoted army engineers as saying the \$226,000 project would prevent future floods on the creek.

THE OLD JUDGE SAYS...



TED: "Clem and I were wonderin' what you thought of that new movie about the chronic alcoholic, Judge. Understand you saw it before we did."

OLD JUDGE: "Well...it's true most of us never see a case as extreme as that in real life because they are so few and far between. But it does point out one thing...chronic alcoholics are abnormal people and we've got to change our ideas about how to help them."

CLEM: "In what way, Judge?"

OLD JUDGE: "We've got to realize that excessive drinkers are suffering from more than a craving for alcohol. According to

psychiatrists and medical men at one of our great universities, the alcoholic is a sick person. The study of hundreds of cases shows he is suffering from some physical, social or emotional condition...just as in the case of that poor chap in the picture. Fortunately, they represent only a very small percentage of those who drink."

TED: "Is anything being done to really help these folks, Judge?"

OLD JUDGE: "Yes...a great deal in clinics throughout the country. And with the cooperation of the beverage distillers who sincerely want their product used only in moderation."

OSC Reports Shortage Of Milk Products

Seasonally increasing production but a continued acute shortage of practically all manufactured dairy products are reported in the weekly dairy review prepared by the OSC extension service from USDA market reports and other data.

While there is no immediate relief in sight for the acute shortage of manufactured dairy products, there is some encouragement in reports that milk production on farms is increasing at a more rapid rate. Fluid milk and cream demands, however, continue to absorb a high proportion of the total output.

Butter production on the Pacific coast gained 3 per cent the past week but was 44 per cent under a year previous. Nationwide production was up 2 per cent but still 30 per cent under a year ago. Receipts of butter at San Francisco during February were 80 per cent below February 1945, with Los Angeles 59 per cent below. Very little butter was available from storage reserves the past week and retail sales decreased about a third from the low level of the previous week. Most stores displayed "no butter" signs.

Butter Output

Government figures indicate that only 21.5 per cent of the 123,000,000,000 pounds of milk produced in 1945 went into butter production, compared with 32 per cent in the 1936-1940 period.

Cheese production on the Pacific coast gained around 7 per cent the past week but was 18 per cent under a year earlier. Nationally the gain was only 5 per cent for the week with output 10 per cent under a year previous. Some improvement in market supplies as the season advances is expected by the trade as set-aside obligations have been mostly fulfilled.

Market supplies of dry milk continued to gain moderately but markets remained very firm on strong demands.

Supplies of evaporated milk were reported about adequate for trade needs but condensed supplies were acutely short and strictly rationed. Sales of condensed skim and buttermilk for animal feed in the east have practically ceased.

OPA To Decide On Essential Building

PORTLAND, March 15 (AP)—The OPA plans to organize committees in each community to decide which building construction is essential, Senator Morse (R-Ore.) has advised the state U. S. employment service director.

L. C. Stoll of the USES said Morse declared: "We can't meet the unemployment problem in many parts of our country unless we build production plants out of which jobs can be created."

Technicians Course To Be Held At OSC

Another short course to train technicians in the artificial insemination of dairy cows will be held at OSC March 18 to 27. This will be similar to, but more complete than the first one held late in December to train those now at work, says P. M. Brandt, head of the animal industries division.

County groups in various stages of organization for this program are located in Clackamas, Tillamook and Coos counties. Dairymen are attracted to the program because it is a means of spreading the benefit of high quality sires through a large number of herds, and because it eliminates the danger and some of the expense of keeping individual herd sires, says Morse.

State Farmers Seek Housing

By The Associated Press

Oregon farmers, anticipating a shortage of farm hands this summer, were hunting about today for housing.

The Polk county farm labor committee reported that lack of housing was one of the greatest deterrents to obtaining labor. Ranchers with facilities for farm hands have the best luck, the committee said.

In Washington county, officials completed plans to set up a six-acre labor camp to house 500 to 1000 itinerant workers during the summer season.

Farmers were counting on help of children in the fields again this season, and several schools have been asked not to open the fall term until the harvest is in.

Ample Water Supplies Seen

PORTLAND, March 15 (AP)—A joint report of soil conservation service and the state agricultural experiment station today reported Oregon will have ample water supplies in 1946.

Run off in some sections may equal the 1943 record flow, the report said, with the state's mountain snow covers all above normal.

Snow cover above the 5000 feet level is 72 per cent greater than last year and 42 per cent above normal. Below that level the snow cover is 352 per cent above last year and 78 per cent above normal. The report said conditions of watershed soils is favorable to a sustained run-off.

Oregon's chief storage reservoirs average 60 per cent of capacity—6 per cent above the 10-year average and 10 per cent above 1945.

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Food Surplus In Northwest Wheat Peas

Oregon's food surplus available for overseas shipment to war-torn nations consists mostly of wheat, dry peas and perhaps some potatoes and dried prunes, according to an analysis of data on food production and population by the extension agricultural economics section at OSC. These are national surplus items produced in the Pacific northwest in greater quantity than needed in Pacific coast markets.

The need for wheat and late potatoes in California, however, exceeds production in that state which is also short on eggs, dairy products and meat. California now has about 7 per cent of the United States population, while 1945 wheat output there was only about 1 per cent of the national total. California egg production was only 3.8 per cent, cattle and calves 3, sheep 5.4 and hogs 1.3 per cent.

The Pacific northwest population is now about 3 per cent of the national total. Thus the four Pacific states have 10 per cent of the population of the nation. This is a population gain in the four states of 27 per cent over the 1935-1939 average, compared with 9 per cent increase in the whole United States.

Milk production in the four

Pacific states, including Idaho, in 1945 is estimated at 8.8 per cent of the national output, with cattle and calves at 6.8 per cent, sheep and lambs 11.6, hogs 2.6, eggs 6.8, turkeys 21.7, wheat 11.1, potatoes 24.7, truck crops for processing 24.6, truck crops for fresh market 32.5, all fruits combined 55.7, tree nuts 59.2, dry beans 39.2 and dry peas 86.5 per cent.

'Yardstick House' To Be Constructed

MEDFORD, March 15 (AP)—Saturday will mark the beginning of "round-the-clock" work on a "yardstick house" which this community hopes will demonstrate efficient, low-cost housing for veterans.

Two main rooms, a shower and "built-ins" will make up the 20x24-foot house, with construction to continue by floodlights at night.

Workmen are being supplied by organized labor groups in Jackson county; materials and furnishings, by businessmen and individuals; the lot, by realtors. Veterans' groups and lodges have formed a committee to provide food for the carpenters.

Weyerhaeuser Will Build Plywood Mill

LONGVIEW, Wash., March 15 (AP)—The Weyerhaeuser Timber company has made plans for the early construction of a large plywood mill here, the company an-

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