

National Potato Letter

Official Spud Forecast Is 77 Million Bushels Off Last Year's Record

By A. L. FitzSimmonds
Potato supplies from the 1949 crop are at least fairly accurately shown in this week's official forecast for a 368.7 million bushel crop. Fortunately, this is 77 million bushels less than the whole of a big production turned out last year, and it is nearly 25 million bushels less than the most recent ten year average.

By areas, compared with last year, more than 30 million bushels of the decrease are in the three eastern surplus states. More than six million bushels are in the five central states, and nearly 20 million bushels in the 10 western states.

The intermediate states account for about 12 million bushels of the decrease and the early states for slightly over 4 million. The remainder is in the deficit late states.

Of the 48 states, only eight show increased production over last year, and most of these are of insignificant proportion with only Florida and Wisconsin showing important variations.

Great Decline
The greatest decrease from 1948 production is in New York where the crop now is estimated as 16 million bushels under 1948. Maine is down 13 million, Idaho 7.6 million, Colorado 4 million and New Jersey 3 million. Several other states range from two to three million bushels under their 1948 production.

For this year's crop, the total plantings are down 201,000 acres from last year. The national average yield is forecast as down from last year's 212.4 bushels to 194.3.

Lower yields are the result principally of weather conditions. Frosts in late June in Idaho and the Klamath basin and the prolonged drought in the Northeast are major contributing factors.

Idaho plantings are down 7000 acres and yields are forecast as 40 bushels under 1948. Oregon plantings are up by 2000 acres but yield is off by 30 bushels per acre.

New Jersey plantings are down 12,000 acres and yield prospect is cut from the 231 bushel average of last year to a current forecast for 127 bushels per acre. This is the lowest yield in New Jersey since 1925. Louisiana plantings are down by 7000 acres and yields are down from 230 bushels of last year to 200 bushels for 1949.

Yields are lower than last year in 36 states, and either larger or unchanged in only 12 states. Maine is in this latter group. The Maine crop now promises 400 bushels per acre, topping the record of 380 bushels set last year, and surpassing every section in the country except for the California early crop which is now estimated at 440 bushels.

Major interest in the size of the crop is its effect from a marketing and price standpoint. A fairly satisfactory analysis, although probably questionable from a scientific standpoint, is obtained by setting up each state's 1947 and 1948 production, subtracting price support purchases, and averaging the remainders.

These average remainders may be listed as "marketed commercially." For comparison, from the 1948 estimate the "marketed commercially" is subtracted for each state, and the resulting figure is the surplus or shortage.

For the United States as a whole, this method is fairly accurate. Applied to individual states, the results are not too conclusive. One glaring fault is that the method ignores imports, which were heavy last year and directly affected price support purchases, especially in Maine.

Net Surpluses
Upon this basis, the analysis shows surpluses in 26 states, amounting to a little over 44 million bushels. It shows deficits in 21 states, amounting to 7.8 million bushels. The net surplus appears to be about 36.7 million bushels, most all of which is in the late states, with about half of the total in the Northeast.

If we arbitrarily assign a two-million bushel surplus to California; assume that 1948 price support purchases in Maine were increased five million bushels by imports from Canada, and assume also that only normal imports will come in this season, the net surplus is reduced to a little over 26 million bushels. This quantity of surplus should be manageable without much difficulty and at not too great cost to the taxpayers. In fact it represents only 20 per cent as many potatoes as the tonnage diverted from the 1948 crop by price support buying.

Markets are affected about as much by emotions as they are by statistics. The short summer supply in the East will exert somewhat of a vacuum pull on western supplies, and the late crop should start on a fairly clean market, without much overlapping movement from the earlier areas.

The current prospect is for fairly firm markets during the next two months. This will give the late crop operators a feeling of strength not directly related to the size of the crop.

If late crop areas feel strong, and temper their feelings with judgment, marketing can be orderly. If the feeling of strength is too pronounced it could result in too much holding for a winter price rise.

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HONOR BESTOWED ON GRANGE—Shasta View grange received a beautiful United States flag from the national grange at the Thursday night meeting. The flag, presented by Lyle Hickman, Pomona master, left, in behalf of the national, was for outstanding community service. Mrs. Louise LaSalle, cere, received the flag for Shasta View grange, as Floyd Hoover, acting assistant steward, and Marian Lewis, acting assistant lady steward, looked on.

'Living Fence' Gains In Popularity In This Area

Popularity of the Rosa Multiflora Japonica 'living fence' is growing in the Pacific Northwest and several Klamath basin farmers are starting it on their ranches. This fence is a tall-growing shrub, easily planted, spacing plants one to four feet apart, using a grub hoe. Besides being an attractive addition to any large property and a shelter for game and song birds it is a wonderful weed control also, pushing out all weed sprouts before they get a start.

A copious blooming of pinkish-white flowers of the wild rose variety covers the shrub in the spring and early summer, producing berries of a cherry red hue which remain and provide sustenance for birds through the winter. Because of the thick, droopy foliage the shelter is perfect for grouse, pheasant, partridge and quail which find a farm haven under its ice-and-snow packed branches in the coldest weather.

The floral fence is also recommended by agriculturists as a natural for conservation farming because it is as easy to plant in contour or terrace rows as in straight, level rows. This plant does not spread from roots and runners and does not affect fertility of soil beyond its own limb spread.

It is best to keep livestock away from it until it gets a good start, as stock will nip the tender green shoots. After that nothing can harm it and it will turn back animals, even bird dogs. Small pigs may burrow under, however.

This plant can be grown in almost any kind of soil. If planted in the fall, much well-but do not cut the tops back until spring. Canes should be cut back to two or three buds or eyes in the spring.

Associated Women Talk New Course
Associated Women of the Bonanza Farm Bureau met in Bonanza last week to discuss plans to promote research in multiple sclerosis.

The women voted to support a research fund program and tie it in with such a national project. Refreshments were served by Elsie Ruck assisted by Mary Pitcher to Margaret Holliday, Jean Rice, Birdie Burk, Emma Ruck, Erma Tafel, Elsie Oberheide, Alice Haley, Lois Van Sipe, Isabel Hesel-tine, Louise Kelly, Katherine Blackman, Juanita Lee, Maude Conger-good, Eula Prough, Thelma Jones, Kenny Rice and Betty Jones.

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Allotments For Wheat Talked Over

Wheat allotments for 1950 was the main subject discussed at a district conference of county agricultural conservation committees and extension workers held at Medford on Tuesday. Counties represented at the meeting were Douglas, Josephine, Jackson, and Klamath.

Klamath county was represented by C. A. Henderson, county agent, and by the following members of the county ACA committee, Burrell Short, Earl Wilson, Wm J. Burnett and L. A. Bruner.

E. Harvey Miller, chairman of the Oregon state production and marketing administration committee, acted as chairman of the conference.

The federal laws pertaining to wheat allotments and marketing quotas were outlined by Ralph Beck, extension specialist from Oregon State college. Beck explained that the secretary of agriculture was required by law to proclaim wheat allotments for 1950 since the estimated 1949 crop plus carryover had reached a certain point. The July 1 estimate of 1949 production was 148 million bushels less than the June 1 estimate, or the secretary would have been required to proclaim marketing quotas. All wheat growers will receive an acreage allotment for 1950, and must plant within that allotment in order to be eligible for price support.

The procedure to be followed by county ACA committees in setting up individual allotments was outlined by representatives of the state PMA office. August 15, 1949 is the date by which all wheat growers must be notified of their allotments.

Rex Warren, extension specialist from Oregon State college, advised that soil conserving crops, such as pasture grasses, clovers, alfalfa, and winter cover crops, should be planted on the acreage diverted from wheat production. However, there will be no restrictions on the use of diverted acreage in 1950.

Baby cottontail rabbits are able to care for themselves at the age of three weeks.



FIELD MAN — William C. Hays, Henley farmer, has joined the force of Klamath Production Credit association as field man.

Crested Wheat Demand Gaining

A heavy demand for crested wheat grass seed of this year's crop is anticipated according to E. R. Jackman, extension service specialist in farm crops. Jackman indicates the same expectations for ladak alfalfa seed.

A 25 per cent reduction in Oregon's wheat acreage is indicated by acreage allotments shortly to be announced. Appreciable shifts of dryland wheat acreage to ladak alfalfa and crested wheat GRASS ARE anticipated.

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