

Spud Crop's Fate Rests With Weather; Shipping Down After Early Spurt

By A. L. FITZSIMMONDS

Weather of the next two months could bring an appreciable change in the total production from the 1949 harvest.

Observers generally agree that there is not likely to be much change in the East, but that extensive shifts could happen elsewhere. The Midwest has had some unusually hot weather and not too much rain recently in some sections. As a result, crop prospects may be deteriorating some although not to any great extent.

In the West, June frosts in Oregon and Idaho mean that these areas must have late killing frosts to get full growth. Already, however, there has been a cold snap in eastern Oregon—not a killer, but enough to raise the question as to how much growing time is left.

In Colorado there appears to be nothing unusual in the weather. Colorado has had ample irrigation water and as yet no troublesome weather. This appears to add to the prospect for a very significant change from the August estimate, barring unusual weather within the next few days. Most likely prospect for Colorado is that any revision in the estimate could be downward as there is too little time for the weather to cause improvement in areas normally harvesting in early September.

Potatoes do grow as long as the vines are green, however, and a late fall could bring an estimate higher than the August forecast. If this should happen, growers and shippers cannot be sure of the final production figure until the November forecast. Most observers express the belief that the August estimate will be very close to the final production from this year's crop.

Movement and Markets

Rail shipments stepped up two weeks ago to 3291 cars but reversed sharply last week to only 2670 cars. At the same time, price support purchases increased to 446 cars, making a net commercial movement of only 2224 cars for the past week.

With more moderate weather in consuming centers, however, demand should pick up soon and encourage heavier shipments. Meanwhile homegrown are moving at a fairly steady rate but the end of these troublesome supplies is not far away.

Currently the heaviest rail movement is coming from Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Colorado. Minnesota and Wisconsin are moving a few cars and Maine is reported to have loaded its first car Tuesday

with North Dakota's first car out Saturday of last week.

Shipping Point Markets

F. O. B. markets have shown considerable dullness and some weakness in recent days. Long Island has slipped off from \$2.55 to a shaky \$2.40 for Size A. Katabdins, with US No. 1 offerings declining from \$2.15 to \$1.90 level in a week.

New Jersey also has declined, losing a quarter on Size A and generally not quoting US No. 1 lots.

Colorado has had little change, standing at 45 to 50 cents over the floor for Bliss and 35 to 40 cents over support for Cobblers. Washington declined a nickel on Burbanks, then advanced 10 cents and started the week on a fairly strong basis.

Growers in most areas appear bullish and are unwilling to sell for less than their ideas. Nowhere are growers rushing the harvest, which is unusual and indicates that the growers feel confident as to their position. Even in New Jersey many producers think their crops are still growing in spite of new sprouts and are holding back on digging.

Miscellaneous

Still nothing definite on potato price support legislation nor will last week's series of newspaper articles giving the lurid details of 1948 crop support activities, especially in Maine, help toward favorable legislation.

One congressman already is pressing for a full-dress investigation of price support programs and whether he prevails or not, the furor is bound to react against the industry and the program. It could knock the props out from under the whole potato program, and even carry some other farm commodities along with it, notably the egg support program.

Potato parity finally has slid off from the \$1.80 level, dropping to \$1.79 last month. The average price received by farmers was estimated by the bureau of agricultural economics at \$1.55, or 87 per cent of the current parity.

A surprising number of persons in and out of the potato industry are wondering if price support laws require or even authorize continued department of agriculture purchase when prices generally are so much above support.

Department of agriculture apparently plans or wants to do more of its purchasing in used rather than new bags. This saves a dime on the price and prevents excessive recovery in bag salvage by buyers. We wonder what this policy might do to used bag prices, and what the department will do

if used bags get too close to new bag prices.

Marketing agreement referendum has been completed in Washington, and an official announcement should be issued soon. Same is true of California, which has been hanging fire since June 30. The California was opposed and the department of agriculture is trying to decide whether or not price support will be denied next year despite the fact that it has said exactly nothing as yet on the California results.

Many potato growers are at the point of rebelling against further acreage cuts. This does not appear quite logical where growers are getting the same tonnage from reduced acreage. Actually, their labor and spray costs will be lower and their gross profits about the same.

Spud Support Deadline Near

The deadline date for payment of potato price support eligibility fees is September 14, 1949 reminds Burrill Short, chairman of the Klamath County Agricultural Conservation association.

All potato growers who have planted within their allotment and wish to be eligible for price support, should call at the county office to pay their fees and sign an eligibility certificate. The office is located at 2035 South Sixth street in the Tower theater building.

Potato acreage measurement should be completed within a few days, and notices as to whether or not the grower has planted within his allotment are being mailed out.

Those growers who receive a notice of excess acreage may either request a remeasurement or forfeit price support on their crop for this year, Short added.

Springfield Plant Lease Announced

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1 (AP)—Lease of an experimental industrial alcohol plant at Springfield, Ore., to three Americans, Ga., persons was announced Wednesday by the war assets division of the general service administration.

The wartime plant was leased to Charles B. Hudson Jr., William S. Hudson and Mrs. W. E. Mitchell for five years.

They plan to use the plant to determine whether production of industrial alcohol from wood waste is practicable, war assets said.

The plant cost the government about \$3,000,000. The lessees told war assets the cost of rehabilitating is expected to be between \$250,000 and \$300,000.

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New Scale Cuts Down On Errors

An electronic scale for livestock weighing, permitting great accuracy and speed and eliminating nearly all possibility of error has been developed by the Production and Marketing Administration of the USDA.

Animals are weighed thru electrical impulses and pressures are recorded electrically. When certain buttons are pressed, weight, number and type of animals, names of weigher and selling agency, and date and time of weighing are printed automatically. It is impossible on the new scale to register anything but the load actually on the platform and it is accurate to within five pounds on loads up to 32,000 pounds.

Since the new scale can be re-balanced with a push-button, accumulations of dirt, manure, rodent interference, or intentional manipulation of the scale are eliminated as a source of error. The dial can be read ten feet away.

Detailed reports on the scale are being prepared for release shortly.

Old Records Go To Belfry

Old city records will be kept and stored in the belfry of the city hall.

Last week the city council voted to change plans to destroy records older than 10 years and instead, stack them away in the bomb shelter at the municipal airport.

However, it was felt that storing them in the city hall would make them more available in the event an occasion arises to dig into old city documents.

The records older than 10 years are now being compiled but will not be tucked away until after the city audit is complete.

Delegates to the United Nations have been asked to limit the length of their speeches since each one takes 288.2 man hours of work, including verbal interpretation and translation in written form in five languages.

Even grasshoppers frequently are bothered by chiggers.

Nitrogen Applications Aids In Rotting Field Straw

In fields littered with straw in regions of more than 20 inches annual rainfall, 20 pounds of available nitrogen applied for each ton of surface material will help rot the straw and provide nitrogen for the succeeding crop, says Leroy Warner, OSG extension soil conservation specialist.

Where excessive straw is mixed with the soil and allowed to rot unaided, a temporary nitrogen shortage may result, the specialist points out. This will adversely affect the succeeding crop.

Ammonium sulphate applied at the rate of 20 pounds of available nitrogen would mean spreading 100 pounds of material. It is best applied in the fall on ground seeded to grain in eastern Oregon in order that the crop will be benefited during low moisture years. Spring applications do not benefit that year's crop, Warner explains.

In areas with less than 20 inches of annual rainfall, the specialist

recommends a fall addition of 30 to 35 pounds of available nitrogen per acre regardless of how much straw is present.

Tests carried on in Wasco county in 1948, showed that wheat yields were increased about eight bushels per acre for the first 20 pounds per acre of available nitrogen applied. Yields were about 16 bushels better where 40 pounds of available nitrogen was put on. The average annual rainfall of this area is 11 to 13 inches, but 1948 was a better than average moisture year.

Figures are not yet available for the 1949 crop year, Warner adds. Yields are expected to be higher as the result of the nitrogen applications. No burning was evident from applications up to 500 pounds of ammonium sulphate per acre in spite of the dry season.

In most areas ammonium sulphate is preferred over ammonium nitrate because it will not leach as

badly in the event of heavy rains. Farmers need to use straw to increase organic matter which results in more plant food, Warner explains. Organic matter also increases the soil water holding capacity which serves as an erosion preventative.

Flying Farmers To Attend Fair

Oregon's "Flying Farmers" will take over the spotlight at the state fair in Salem on Tuesday, September 6, when they land, 150 strong, on a 20-acre patch of the exposition's huge parking area.

The aerial agriculturists will fly to the fairgrounds from McMinnville as a part of the fair's farm organization day.

Merrill Man Fined In Accident Case

Clifford Welch, 30, of Merrill, was fined \$55 Wednesday morning in municipal court on charges resulting from an automobile accident on S. 6th in front of the Lee Hendricks Drug store yesterday afternoon.

Welch was driver of a car which smashed into the rear end of a parked automobile driven by Jerry Morgan, 20, 1822 Academy. Welch admitted he had been drinking beer prior to the accident but was booked for reckless driving and having no operator's license.

He pleaded guilty to the charges. Ostrich eggs weigh approximately three pounds.

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