

Herald and News FARM NEWS

National Potato Letter

Spud Outlook Slightly Improved In September; Markets Generally Good

By A. L. FITZSIMMONS

September potato crop estimate shows only slight improvement in the production forecast. Normally the scant half-million bushel increase is not important. By areas some of the changes are significant.

The Northeastern surplus states show no change from the August forecast which means the expectation of heavier yields in Maine was dampened by the dry weather during August. Considerable change in prospects did occur in the Midwest however where the Michigan and Wisconsin increase of 1.3 million bushels was offset by a decrease of 1.6 million bushels in Minnesota and North Dakota.

Somewhat similar changes occurred in the West where all except the west coast area declined or remained unchanged from the August forecast. But Oregon, Washington and California gained enough tonnage in the forecast to raise the total one-third of a million bushels. California alone gained 1.1 million bushels indicating at least partial recovery from the June frost. The part of the California late crop affected however is the central potato area of the state.

Other late states show a gain over the August estimate of 0.2 million bushels. New Jersey made a surprising comeback picking up 0.6 million bushels and other small adjustments in the intermediate group brought the total increase to 0.7 million.

The potato crop is not likely to make much further growth and improvement from now on but the production still could vary from the current estimate. Maine is reported to have had a moderate frost over the past week-end although not enough for a complete kill of the vines. Other sections also have had cool weather with vines killed in some spots. These reports assure that the late harvest will be in full swing within a matter of very few days.

Reports on the 1950 planting prospects already are coming in. The Texas winter crop is ready to go into the ground with the tonnage of stored seed stock indicating an increase in the Texas acreage.

Movement and Markets
Shipments last week showed a slight increase to 3285 cars compared with the 2958 cars of the previous week. Government price support buying increased by 54 cars so the net commercial movement for the week did not get the full increase in the loadings.

Wisconsin moved 605 cars closely followed by Idaho and North Dakota. Michigan is the only important section from a carload standpoint not yet reporting shipments.

Markets are in generally good shape considering that the heavy late crop harvest is starting and that fair quantities of homegrown stock still are moving to markets. These homegrown generally are not of too good quality but they still are a market factor.

Price reports quote the East at about 70 cents over floor for size A and 10 cents over support for straight U S No. 1 offerings of rather ordinary size.

Upstate New York is about the

weakest spot in the East at only 40 cents over the floor. Wisconsin reports prices at 60 cents over support. Prices in the West range from 75 cents over floor in Colorado to \$1.15 to \$1.20 over in Washington.

Heavy part of the harvest may bring some sagging of prices but for the long pull observers generally predict an upward trend.

Research
A recent research meeting on potatoes brought forth considerable discussion of dried potatoes for livestock feed, and suggested more research to develop practical small drying units for local use. Not one word was said, however, about research to make sun drying a commercial success. The process has been known and used for years in the West, but last year and again this year the department of agriculture demonstrated conclusively that it can be just as successfully applied in the humid East and South as in the near desert areas.

Application of sun drying may provide the potato industry with a real chance to build a permanent outlet for low grades. Research may be able to develop machinery for year around operation to do what the sun and wind can do from April to October.

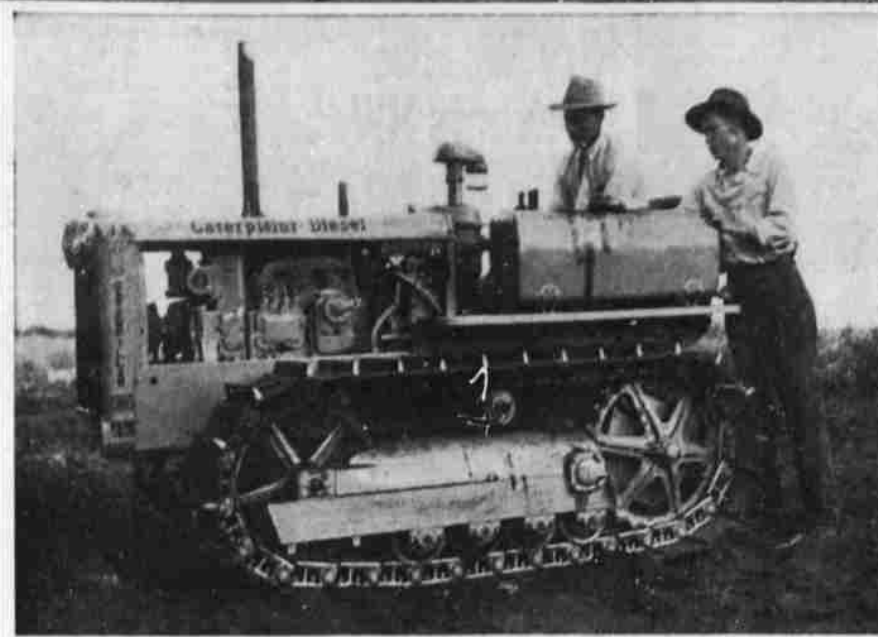
Miscellaneous
Pattern of marketing order regulations is taking shape, with some regulations already in effect and others in the "recommendation" stage. In the meantime, the department of agriculture finally got around to publishing results of the California referendum on a potato marketing agreement. Result of the vote was negative so it was published in the Federal Register and not issued as a press release.

Simultaneously, Secretary Brannan wrote to Senator Thomas, of the senate agriculture committee saying that he intends to deny price support in the area. He has not yet denied support—just says he intends to. It is a queer maneuver and leaves us wondering as to just what will happen.

The letter to Senator Thomas carried as an attachment the best and most complete summary of potato price support and its problems that we have seen so far. It winds up with a plug for the Brannan Plan which is not surprising but for the most part is factual and worth reading. Groups undertaking serious study of price support should have it.

Department of agriculture has shifted to a very high priced dye for identifying livestock feed potatoes. So high priced in fact that it required invention and hurry-up fabrication of a unique measuring device to avoid waste of even a spoonful.

First American airplanes in combat service in World War I were navy flying boats.



LOOKING OVER A NEW TRACTOR at the Klamath agriculture experiment station are Ray Button (standing) and Al Halverson of the station. The tractor was given to the station by the Reed Tractor company.

Ryegrass Crops Reported With Less Blind Seed Ills

Preliminary germination tests made from the 1949 perennial ryegrass crop show the blind-seed disease control program is effectively curbing the disease, reports Dr. John R. Hardison, USDA plant pathologist working at the OCS experiment station.

Judging from approximately 150 seed samples, 80 per cent of this year's crop is showing up with 90 per cent germination or better. Last year, the worst year on record for blind-seed disease, only 64 per cent of the seed lots rated 90 per cent germination or above.

Yet findings made thus far show at least 42 per cent of the fields need to be burned over again as a disease control measure. Linn county is the primary district involved since most of Oregon's perennial ryegrass seed crop is grown in that county. Last year, however 80 per cent of the fields needed to be burned, according to Hardison's findings.

Fearing that farmers will become complacent again about the perennial ryegrass disease which affects seed germination adversely, Hardison is urging all farmers in Linn

county to burn over their perennial ryegrass fields again this fall. While germination percentages are up, he points out that the disease itself is still present. A year of lax control measures would be a decided setback, he believes.

To those farmers replanting perennial ryegrass, the pathologist seed or seeds that is at least 24 months old. Lots of disease-free

approved seed lots are now in the hands of county extension agents. Fields which are badly infested with blind-seed disease are not safe for replanting perennial ryegrass for at least two years, during which they are devoted to other crops. To prevent emergence of spore cups and discharge of disease spores, Hardison recommends that plowing of such infested fields be done before May 15.

Since blind seed disease does not affect forage quality, it is of no importance outside the seed growing area.

Northwest U.S. Growers Eye Canadian Competition Threat After Devaluation

SEATTLE, Sept. 22 (AP)—Washington state producers and growers are casting apprehensive glances northward wondering if and how soon cut-rate Canadian commodities may begin shouldering them out of domestic and foreign markets.

A survey of the possible effects of the Canadian dollar devaluation shows varying degrees of nervousness among state livestock men, apple and wheat growers, and lumber, pulp and flour shippers.

Producers are convinced that their export markets will become more competitive and that domestic surpluses will tend to bring about price reductions. These will be good for consumers, but will hurt producers, especially marginal operators.

Apple growers are hopeful that their quality fruit might hold its own in domestic markets, but they fear that British Columbia apples

of the same variety will no longer be held back by the 35 cent duty per box.

Livestock
Cattlemen point to the soaring imports of Canadian livestock from north of the border during the past two years and feel the movement will be sharpened. Imports of cattle in the Washington customs district amounted to \$6,795,000 last year, against a 1947 figure of only \$12,000.

Lumber producers, too, are pessimistic. Said one: "Britain is continuing its austerity program so the export market will be further reduced. Canadian producers have the United Kingdom market handed to them and with their own devaluation, a tax of \$1 a thousand board feet will not keep them out of our market."

Sweden's devaluation was viewed as giving that country an advantage in the international pulp market and Australian markdown will give its flour producers an edge in the competitive Oriental field.

Export Guards
According to foreign trade men, however, some factors may restrain tendencies to increase exports sharply.

They claim that the increase of 18 cents a bushel on Canadian wheat for export to countries other than the United Kingdom will close

the gap of the 10 per cent devaluation, resulting only in an exchange profit for the Canadian shipper.

Also, Canadian railroads have slapped a 8 per cent surcharge on freight rates to and from the United States. This was designed to prevent Canadian carriers from loss in dividing revenues on international shipments with United States carriers. This may also operate to discourage some export business.

Underground Water Saves Sheep

ADELAIDE (AP)—A geological freak may save 2,000,000 South Australian sheep from drought. Kye peninsula, at the eastern end of the Great Australian Bight, has had an exceptionally dry winter. Its reservoirs are at a record low level. The outlook was grim.

The geologists made a discovery—a perfect underground reservoir holding 7500 million gallons of pure water. That is more water than South Australia's biggest man-made reservoir holds.

Permanent springs led geologists to the hidden underground water store. They found a reservoir of 19 square miles lying from 60 to 100 feet beneath the surface.

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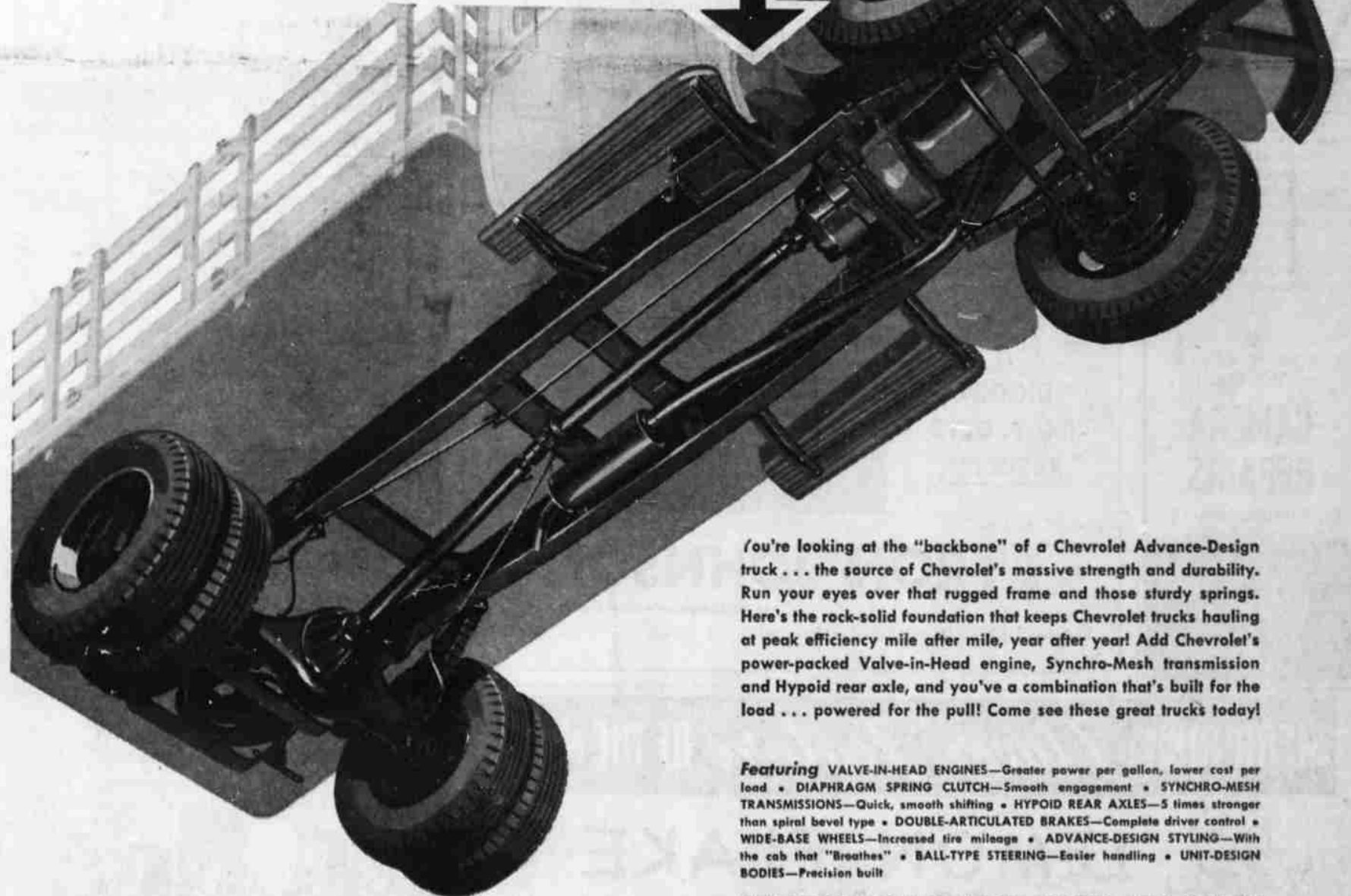
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