

Herald and News FARM NEWS

National Potato Letter

Potato Men Disagree On Frost; Shipments Show Steady Increase

By A. L. FITZSIMMONDS

Frost in some potato areas definitely have stopped growth, but reports disagree as to whether the frosts have been early, late or about normal as to occurrence.

Based on the past two or three seasons, the 1949 frost seems to be early, but there have been years of late frosts and high yields. Over a longer period, frost in the first half of September have been the rule rather than the exception and for this reason it does not appear logical to assume that the 1949 frost can cause any great reduction in the late crop estimate of production.

This many not hold in the Klamath basin and in Idaho, where a very late fall was needed to get maximum growth so as to recover from the June frost damage. To say that the potato crop in Maine or North Dakota has been hurt by the mid-September frosts would not be sound reasoning.

First estimate of 1950 crop winter potato acreage has been released by the bureau of agricultural economics. It calls for an increase from last year's 9500 acres to 10,700 acres for the new crop. All but 400 acres of the total are in Florida. No reports have been received as yet on later plantings.

Movement and Markets

Shipments have climbed considerably since the mid-August slump. Last week's movement reached 4097 cars, of which 298 cars were for the government and 3808 for commercial outlets. Idaho, North Dakota and Wisconsin were almost even at 717, 628 and 695 cars for the week. Colorado tonnage is increasing again with the overlap of the end of the early movement and the beginning of the late harvest. Oregon is in the same position as is Colorado, shifting from the early Eastern area crop to the Western area late deal. Minnesota shipments are beginning.

News from the job markets is about normal for this time of the year. Long Island, New Jersey and Maine all are showing weaker tendencies with the demand light to moderate and prices off 10 to 20 cents from a week ago.

Wisconsin has held a steady market at 60 cents over the floor. Up state New York rules unchanged at 40 cents over support.

Washington weakened five cents during the week to \$1.20 over floor. Colorado declined a dime to 35 cents over support. It is interesting to note, however, that the lowest prices quoted on US No. 1 stock are a dime over floor and that Size A prices range from 40 cents to \$1.20 over.

The current softening of job markets is mainly a normal harvest time adjustment. For the most part, growers are bullish and inclined to store. In addition they are busy digging and probably will not haul freely until the harvest nears completion.

With one exception, the supply and demand prospects appear to have been fully discounted. Maine may have to meet considerable Canadian competition, and there is no way this can be adequately reckoned with until tonnage of these imports is more clearly defined. Canadian potatoes will continue as an uncertainty through at least the early portion of the deal in Maine.

Legislation
Hearings have been held on the Thomas bill which seeks to drop potatoes and eggs from mandatory price support. Testimony last week and this has been mainly on eggs with very little on potatoes. Makes little difference to potato growers as the bill will die in committee.

Recent unfavorable publicity likely was timed to "throw sand in the gears," at least it has led to proposed house resolution for an investigation. The house, now reconvening after a three week vacation, may take some days before indicating its approval or disapproval. Anything an investigation could bring out already is known, but in their term, the foundation of price

support for all commodities is made less secure.

Miscellaneous

The Canadian potato quota opened September 15, with reports that trucks were lined up in considerable numbers at crossing points. Total tonnage that may come into the United States from Canada cannot be accurately estimated but Canada does have a potato crop of 10 to 15 million bushels over its domestic requirements. The United States is likely to get most of this surplus unless a barrier of some kind is raised.

In some areas, growers appear to have confused the loan rates on potatoes with support prices. Loan rates are not support prices, and are lower than support. Borrowers get support by selling their potatoes to the Commodity Credit Corporation, repaying loans in cash.

Colorado reports considerable hail damage from recent storms. Extent of the damage has not yet been determined but it may reduce yields slightly.

Department of agriculture has developed a variant of the benzene hexachloride that caused so much trouble two years ago. Initially it is being used principally in dairies to control flies and lacks the musty odor of the original product. This may mean that it can prove effective for wire worm control without the bad after effects of the old benzene hexachloride.

Potato chip manufacturers think enough of their special potato needs that they have hired a research director to study their problems. The chip industry has grown to the point where it has become a 20 million bushel customer, to which the potato industry can afford to cater.

Railroads in Maine again are preparing rate cuts to meet truck competition. Simultaneously, requests by West Coast shippers for rate reductions have been denied. What can happen where tonnage can be diverted from the rails to the trucks.

Spud Prices Irregular; Onions Slow

Potatoes were irregular the past week, according to the potato and truck crop review prepared by the OEC extension service from USDA reports and other data.

Midwestern potato markets were weaker, with some price declines noted. Pacific coast markets, however, were steady to firm.

At Chicago, western Idaho Russets sold off cars Monday at mostly \$4.45 to \$4.50 a hundred pound sack of No. 1-A's. That was 5 to 10 cents lower than a week ago, but around 35 to 40 cents above a year ago.

At Kansas City, carlot sales of Idaho Russets ranged from \$3.85 to \$4.10.

Minneapolis reported No. 1 Washington Russets at \$3.90 a hundred, carlot track sales.

Portland and Seattle markets were generally steady to firm this week.

On Monday, track sales of Washington Russets ranged from \$3.00 to \$3.10 at Portland and \$3.05 to \$3.15 at Seattle. These prices were up to 15 cents above early last week.

Onion markets were mostly dull the past week. Prices were generally lower.

At Chicago, Idaho Sweet Spanish onions moved off cars at \$2.00 to

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FIVE EARS OF CORN instead of the usual one, boasts Willis King of 3450 Crest. Willis holds another peculiarity from the corn field, an ear that decided to grow again.

Oregon's Population Ahead Of Meat, Milk Production

Oregon's output of meat and milk scarcely equals state needs now that the population has increased one-half since prewar. That is a general conclusion to be drawn from facts and figures in the latest farm outlook circular issued by the extension service at Oregon State college, now available from county extension agents.

The purpose of the report is to aid producers in planning their production and marketing operations. There are sections on the feed supply situation, dairy products, beef cattle, hogs, and sheep. Several charts and tables of data are included to show trends in prices, production and consumer demand.

Big Factors

Meat animals, cattle, hogs and sheep and dairy production account for about two-fifths of Oregon's cash receipts from farm marketing. Currently, the state is close to a balance on milk and beef with a heavy deficit in hogs, but still has some seasonal surplus of lambs.

The three Pacific coast states together are short on dairy production, beef and hogs, but not much if any surplus of lambs. The seven far western states produce a large surplus of the lambs, however.

Many Lambs

While lambs move eastward to market, some beef, much pork, and considerable dairy products reach Pacific coast markets from beyond the Idaho-Utah-Nevada-Arizona area. The seven-state total output of lambs in 1948 was almost one-fourth of the national total. But of beef it was 10.1 per cent, of pork only 2.1 per cent, and of milk 9.8 per cent, against 11.1 per cent of the U. S. population.

Feed is basic in the long-term outlook, the report points out. Nationally, feed supplies are of record proportion for the 1949-50 feeding season in relation to animal numbers. Huge supplies of corn and other feeds are available in the corn-belt states.

Midwest Competition

Thus despite the great increase in Pacific coast market demands,

\$2.05 a 50-lb. sack the first of the week. These prices are 5 to 10 cents lower than a week earlier, and around 70 cents lower than a year ago.

At Portland, Idaho whites were down as much as 35 to 55 cents for the week. Yakima Spanish and yellows, however, held unchanged.

Cabbage prices advanced on the wholesale market at Portland the past week. Medium sized heads of round cabbage sold at \$2.00 to \$2.25 a crate—50 cents above a week earlier but around 25 cents lower than a year ago.

competition from Midwest producers is a factor in the outlook. In addition to the abundance and cost of feeds, transportation rates and other marketing charges enter in.

The report raises this question: With what products can Oregon producers compete best against mid-western meat and milk products in Pacific coast markets over the years ahead?

Plant Chief Plans New York Trip

SALEM, Sept. 29 (AP)—Frank McKennon, chief of the state division of plant industry, will be in New York the week of October 10 to preside over the annual meeting of the National Association of Marketing Officials.

He was elected president at its convention in Portland last year. In New York, McKennon will study the condition of Oregon products when they arrive at Eastern markets.



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Farm Values Job Nearing Completion

An appraisal of all Klamath county farm lands, undertaken by the assessor's office, is about 80 per cent complete, according to Gilbert E. Hillmon, appraisal engineer from the Salem tax commission office who has been handling the work.

The appraisal probably will be finished next spring and at that time values in farm property arrived at through the appraisal will be placed on the tax rolls.

A business and residential reappraisal will start in the spring. The current work on farm lands is the first complete evaluation of farm lands since 1932, although a partial appraisal was made in 1936. About six weeks more of field work remains to be done, Hillmon said, on private lands within the Klamath Indian reservation and on land in a few scattered areas of the county.

None of the new valuations on existing farm lands appeared on the tax rolls this year, but while in the process of making the new appraisals when workers found new land brought into cultivation or new improvements not previously evaluated, those were put on the tax rolls at a value comparable to similar lands or improvements.

Those "pickups" amounted to only around \$80,000 in appraised valuation, Hillmon said, a very small part of the increase in general county appraised valuations which jumped from \$42 millions last year to \$49 millions for the current year.

The big increase came in heavy construction and in tighter appraisals of personal property.

Two deputies of the assessor's office have been assisting Hillmon in the farm reappraisal work which started about 16 months ago.

Pacific Hop Markets Generally Firm

PORTLAND, Sept. 29 (AP)—Pacific coast hop markets are reported generally firm by the U. S. department of agriculture.

The hop supply was estimated at 68,940,000 pounds; 29,940,000 pounds held over from last year plus the 39,000,000 pounds which are salable



HE'LL ROLL HIS OWN—George Grove, employee of Swan Lake Moulding company, has long delighted in exotic and unusual plants and especially those peculiar to this area. A year ago he brought a few full grown tobacco plants from Missouri and one had seed pods. Grove planted the pods in February in the green house and is now harvesting a nice year's supply of smoking tobacco. It takes about one year to cure the leaves, Grove said.

under the federal marketing agreement from the current crop. Most of the holdover was in brewers hands.

The USDA report said Oregon's market was a "very firm, despite rather slow trading." Several deals were reported at 33 cents a pound for fuzzies, and 32 cents for clusters (4 per cent leaf and stem). Export inquiry was good.

Astoria Cranberry Harvest Short

ASTORIA, Sept. 29 (AP)—The cranberry harvest is underway in the bogs here—but it isn't a very good one.

The crop was estimated at 13,300

barrels, well short of last year's yield. And the price was lower, too; \$3.50 a quarter barrel. A barrel contains 100 pounds.

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