

# Herald and News FARM NEWS



## National Potato Letter

### New Potato Forecast Surprises by Hiking Early Crop Figures

By A. L. FITZSIMMONDS

New official potato crop estimate, released this week, pushed the 1949 total production forecast up to the surprisingly high level of 378.8 million bushels. This is 15.7 million bushels more than the September estimate.

Actual crop improvement during September could be responsible for much of the increase but most observers are inclined to the belief that the current forecast includes delayed accounting for higher yields in some areas than had been recognized in earlier reports.

We have previously reported the widely held belief among Maine growers that the yield there is far and away on top of anything ever before recorded. The current report puts the Maine yield at 425 bushels, up 25 bushels in a month, a real surprise to growers in most areas but not particularly so to the trade in Maine.

The really amazing changes are in other Eastern states, especially New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Long Island gained 10 bushels in yield and half a million bushels in production. Upstate New York gained 40 bushels in yield and three million bushels in production.

Pennsylvania yield forecast is up 25 bushels and production up 2.5 million bushels. Even in New Jersey, probably hardest hit by the summer drought, the yield gain is 15 bushels and the production gain is more than two-thirds of a million bushels.

Smaller gains were registered in the West. Most significant of these is in Colorado which is now forecast as 1.3 million bushels over the September estimate. Washington is up 0.9 million bushels, Oregon 0.5 million and California 0.5 million.

In contrast Idaho dropped to 0.7 million bushels below the September forecast. Total for the West is up 2.7 million bushels over a month ago.

Small gains also are noted for all of the other late states except Iowa which is down slightly and New Mexico which is unchanged from the September forecast.

This heavy increase in Eastern supplies will have a more unfavorable effect on the markets than it would if the increase had been more uniformly spread over the country. It leaves the East with too large a percentage of the total late crop, whereas the West still is far under last year's production and only a little over average for the area.

The Midwest production is substantially under last year and still

more under average. What we seem to have is another 1947, when uneven supplies caused a mild shortage in the West and a moderate surplus in the East, with the Midwest about right.

This year, however, the situation is even more clouded by the postponed a crop of 81 million bushels against a reported requirement of 45 million. The Canadian crop is considerably under last year in total (11 million bushels) but most of the decline is in the central and western provinces, while the eastern provinces are bulging with stocks.

**Canadian Surplus**  
This means not only that Canada has 16 million bushels of exportable surplus but that Canada has about the same geographical distribution as does the United States. This makes it natural to expect that Canadian offerings will compete mostly on the East coast, where our own supplies are already excessive.

We are not trying to be bearish on this point — only realistic. The real situation may not become apparent for some time but we doubt that any very serious or successful effort will be made by Canada to control the across-the-border movement of its potatoes.

Canada only recently acted to again admit our exports of fresh fruits and vegetables, either restricted or barred because of the value of Canadian imports from the United States is vastly larger than our maximum potato imports from Canada could be, Canadian exporters are in the driver's seat.

**Canadian Aid**  
Uncle Sam — or is it Uncle Sugar — will be supporting prices on Canadian potatoes again this season. This may not be undesirable from a broad national and international viewpoint, but it will not look good to our taxpayers or to the members of congress.

Rail shipments are down a little from the high point of three weeks ago, indicating the winding up of harvesting in many areas and a willingness to send stocks to storage until prices more nearly suit growers.

Currently the big movement is from Idaho and North Dakota, although much of the Red River valley stock will be stored in transit. Maine is very slow in getting started because of the wet weather. The Maine harvest has been badly delayed, and unless better progress is made soon there is very real danger of a ground freeze.

Such a freeze in Maine would act to reduce supplies, but the net effect on markets would be bad. Frozen potatoes, even a few of them



**BRIGHT SUNSHINE FILTERS DOWN THROUGH** fruit laden branches in this old orchard on the highway just beyond the post office at Olene and bordering Lost river. Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Humphrey of 2200 Patterson, caught the eye of The Herald and News photographer as they gathered boxes of apples in the orchard. The orchard reportedly is one of the oldest in the county and is owned by Leo Donovan. Harvest time, too, for something else besides spuds.

in the sack, will not carry and they can not be sorted out satisfactorily. Field frost always creates bad arrivals and bad arrivals always creates bad markets.

Eastern markets currently are showing some tendency to weaken, although not badly and not down to support except for straight US No. 1 offerings in New Jersey and Long Island. Prices generally still are 10 to 40 cents over the floor, with the widest margins in the drought areas where the larger potatoes are scarce. Western job prices have strengthened although the gains mostly have been small.

Washington and the San Luis valley of Colorado have adopted marketing regulations prohibiting the shipment of potatoes below US No. 2 grade and 1 1/2 inches minimum diameter. New Jersey has its hearings on an agreement program on October 24.

New Jersey State Potato association has published some good hints on how to avoid injury in handling for storage. Every point made is well known, but is good advice and worth repeating.

A year ago potatoes retailed at an average of 5.5 cents per pound with 90 per cent of parity support. This year, as of July, they were 5.5 cents per pound at 60 per cent support. A lot of people, including congressmen, have been asking "How come?"

**Parity**  
Potato parity went off another one cent per bushel last month, and average farm prices went off sharply to \$1.38 per bushel, or 78 per cent of current parity. Seasonally

low support prices coupled with some amkr pressure did it. New legislation is still not clear. Pressure is on the senate to get something done, but lines are so crossed that anything could happen.

Title II of the Aiken act still could go into effect in the event of a deadlock or a presidential veto. Administration would like this — if it only dared to bring it about — as it would provide ammunition for "ballooning" the Brannan plan during the coming election year.

### Research Gives Good Tips on Spud Storing Temps, Wounds Studied

By C. A. HENDERSON  
County Extension Agent

A little research into bulletins from North Dakota Agricultural college and Cornell university indicates that it might be particularly worthwhile to closely observe daily temperatures of potato cellars when potatoes are first stored in the fall. It is the general feeling that potatoes should be immediately cooled at regular winter storage temperatures.

**Curing Period**  
The work in North Dakota indicates that before lowering to the regular temperature around 38 degrees, a curing period of two weeks should be allowed the potatoes at a temperature of 60 degrees F.

They found this prevented decay and allowed bruised and injured potatoes to heal.

They also pointed out that general cellar temperatures was usually a little lower than the actual temperature of the potatoes.

The research work at Cornell indicates that potatoes stored for eight to 12 days at 63 to 68 degree cellar temperature lost considerably less weight in subsequent shrinkage than those stored for the same length of time at 39 to 44 degrees.

They also found that the amount of loss due to decayed tubers was much less when stored at the higher temperature.

**Wound Healing**  
This work showed that substitution (wound-healing of bruises or cuts) first made its appearance on the second day in tubers stored at 68 degrees but was not detected until the 6th day in tubers stored at 36 degrees.

Wound periderm cover was first noted on the third day of storage at 68 degrees, whereas tubers stored at 44 degrees had no periderm layer at the end of the 12-day temporary storage.

This delay in wound-healing offers greater possibilities in loss of weight of injured tubers owing to the large evaporation of moisture and the higher rate of respiration increasing tuber decay.



**NEW ASSISTANT COUNTY AGENT**—J. D. Vertrees took over his duties at the county agent's office last month to replace Jim Elings. Vertrees is at present laying plans for a hog sale to be held early in the year.

The Cornell report emphasized that mechanical injuries incurred during harvesting and handling have a very marked influence on shrinkage and decay during storage. Mechanical injuries also cause greater losses in respiration.

Several other official bulletins by other states indicate the same findings and tend to show that losses in potatoes stored at too low a temperature are greater than when a curing period of 10 days to two weeks at 60 to 65 degrees is allowed. This might be worth thinking about.

### Grandmother In College, Likes School

LA GRANDE, Oct. 20 (AP)—Mrs. Grace Wright Powers, 70-year-old grandmother who has just enrolled as a college freshman, explained that "I like school."

Until she registered at Eastern Oregon college of education this fall, Mrs. Powers hadn't been inside a classroom since 1894. That was when she was a pupil at Union, Ore.

"It's education for my own enlightenment," she said. "I like school very much—and I always have. But I've been too busy to go to college until now."

The white-haired lady, who books under arm, trudges twice a day up the steep hill to the campus, is taking Oregon history, typing, essentials of speech, American literature, and English composition.

She hopes to use most of them in writing the story of her father, Dunham Wright, an Oregon pioneer who lived to the age of 100.

### Corrals Aid In Lice Fight

The months of November and December are the best time for control of lice on cattle. Don't let these pests drag your cattle down during winter feeding.

A good corral simplifies the work of spraying for cattle pests. The County agent's office offers a circular on the construction of good corrals.

Cattle lice are becoming a serious pest—more important now that beef prices are lower.

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**BRIEF NOTES ON The Champagne Music of LAWRENCE WELK**

This is the first Northwest tour for Lawrence Welk. His only stops in Oregon are Klamath Falls and Portland.

He has been a favorite with Midwest dancers for many years. His band replaces Guy Lombardo's at the Roosevelt hotel in New York each summer during Guy's vacation.

His music satisfies every type of dancer from the young to the old. He is famous for his polkas and schottisches.

He is one of the few leaders in the country to feature both an electric organ and a celeste.

The Oct. 8, 1949, issue of the "Billboard" (national amusement magazine) in reviewing Welk's band at the Hollywood Palladium, says in part: "His music is just as plain and down to earth as good beer, and is one of the best musical brews of its kind at that. Patrons go for Welk in a big way, filling the floor to dance rather than look. Crowd is enthusiastic about the Welk brand of music and shows its appreciation with much applause after each number."

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