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FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

July, 1947.

FRUIT.

Coloured Dessert Apples Relatively Scarce and Dearer.

Supplies of apples during the month were again principally from interstate sources. Choice coloured dessert lines were at all times insufficient for retail requirements and prices advanced to still higher levels than those recorded during June. The Granny Smith variety, however, was well represented and choice green packs were much in demand. Lines in yellow condition were less popular but, due to the scarcity of coloured dessert varieties, steady clearances were effected. Prices showed little fluctuation and ranged as follows on most selling days:—*New South Wales*: Delicious, 16s. to 34s., selected counts 36s. to 38s., few 40s.; Rome Beauty, 16s. to 28s., few 30s.; Dougherty, 14s. to 30s.; Democrat, 10s. to 18s., few 20s. to 22s.; Stayman's Winesap, 24s. to 28s.; Statesman, 20s. to 24s.; Granny Smith, 14s. to 22s., special green, 24s. to 28s., isolated sales 30s. to 32s.; *Tasmanian*: Delicious, 16s. to 23s.; Geeveston Fanny, 16s. to 20s.; Crofton, 12s. to 20s., few 22s.; Democrat, 13s. to 20s.; Cleopatra, 14s. to 18s.; Granny Smith, 14s. to 20s.; *Western Australian*: Delicious, 16s. to 23s.; Yates, 18s. to 21s. (few early quotations 22s. to 26s.); Cleopatra, 10s. to 16s.; Granny Smith, 16s. to 22s.; *Victorian*: Delicious, 20s. to 28s.; Jonathan, 15s. to 24s., special to 28s.; Rome Beauty, 10s. to 27s.; King Cole, 14s. to 20s., special to 24s., few 25s.; Munro Favourite, 12s. to 15s.; Statesman, 12s. to 24s.; Cleopatra, 12s. to 17s.; Granny Smith, 14s. to 20s., few 22s. per bushel case. Some inferior and very small fruit were cheaper than the minimum prices quoted above.

Dull Demand for Pears During Last Two Weeks of Month.

Receivals of pears from New South Wales growing areas continued to be light but ample supplies from Victoria were augmented by moderate shipments from Tasmania. Prices advanced by approximately 2s. to 4s. per case for the first three weeks of the month, but from 21st July onwards a marked falling off in the retail demand caused values to recede to former levels. Towards closing, sellers experienced difficulty in maintaining clearances and many packs which remained on the floors until they reached a forward-ripe condition were sold at considerably reduced rates. This situation was further aggravated by the fact that a large proportion of the weekly consignments was ripe on arrival. Closing quotations for New South Wales and Victorian lines were on a par with those recorded in last issue, best New South Wales Packham's Triumph realising to 18s. Tasmanian Winter Cole brought mainly 12s. to 15s., but as much as 17s. per bushel case was obtained early in the period.

Prices for Bananas Increase.

The regulations imposing a fixed maximum wholesale rate on the sale of bananas were withdrawn on Thursday, 3rd July, although a maximum margin of profit for retailers is still prescribed. As a result of the light supplies, prices increased, but sellers imposed a voluntary ceiling price of 48s. per banana case in order to prevent rates from rising too sharply. For a time most choice fruit brought the voluntary ceiling price although very small sizes were available from 38s. The increased retail rates, however, had an adverse effect upon demand and sellers were soon obliged to make reductions in order to maintain clearances. This was particularly noticeable with regard to six-inch and smaller fruit. By the end of the month quotations were fairly stable as follow :— Cavendish, 8-9 inch, 44s. to 48s., sevens, 40s. to 44s., sixes, 36s. to 40s., small and inferior from 20s.; Lady Finger (large), 30s. to 40s., (small), 20s. to 25s. per banana case. Supplies were mainly from northern districts of New South Wales although moderate quantities were received from Queensland.

Market for Navel Oranges Shows Little Fluctuation.

Consignments of navel oranges from coastal districts were fairly regular during the period under review and the market showed little fluctuation. On most selling days standards brought from 8s. to 12s., although well-coloured packs of selected counts realised 13s. to 14s. on occasions. Plain grade fruit was quoted mainly at 6s. to 8s. per bushel case. Only moderate quantities came to hand from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and rates were approximately equal to those given above.

Lemons Plentiful and Fairly Cheap.

Receivals of lemons from coastal districts were at most times in excess of trade requirements and a large carry-over remained at the conclusion of trading on most selling days. Transactions involving moderate or large quantities took place mainly within the range of 3s. to 6s. per bushel case, but choice packs brought from 7s. to 10s. and occasionally to 12s. when sold in small quantities. Very few Queensland lemons were available.

Mandarins Well Supplied and Values Remain at Moderate Levels.

Offerings of mandarins were sufficient for the needs of retailers and prices generally showed little alteration from those ruling during the previous month. Most sales took place within the range of 8s. to 14s., although choice large fruit brought 15s. to 16s. per bushel case, and occasionally higher on some selling days. Small sizes were neglected by buyers, and sellers were unable to dispose of them even at very low rates. A few Queensland mandarins came to hand early in the period, Glen Retreats and Ellandales both bringing from 8s. to 16s., with special 18s. to 20s. per bushel case.

Quotations for Passionfruit Decline Gradually.

Supplies of passionfruit increased slowly throughout the month and prices showed a corresponding decline. Choice well-coloured packs represented only a small proportion of total offerings, and a large percentage of receipts opened up in green condition. At opening, as much as 28s. per half-case was obtained for best lots, but at the end of the month choice were quoted mainly at 20s. to 24s. Other grades realised from 6s. to 18s., according to size, condition, and degree of colour, semi-green lines being practically unsaleable.

Papaws Cheaper.

Although consignments of papaws from Queensland, which amounted to approximately 3,750 tropical cases, were nearly 450 cases lighter than for the previous month, prices declined. This was attributed to a weaker retail demand as a result of the cold weather. A large percentage of each consignment opened up in green and lightly coloured condition, and many packs were lost owing to breakdown before ripening. Sellers were able to clear only ripe and well-coloured lots and prices ranged mainly from 10s. to 20s. per tropical case, although as much as 25s. was realised on occasions.

Increased Supplies of Queensland Pineapples.

Receipts of pineapples from Queensland amounted to 25,519 tropical cases. Early quotations ranged mainly from 12s. to 22s. per tropical case but, during the latter half of the period, as much as 26s. was obtained for best packs. The regulations which formerly imposed a fixed maximum price of 26s. 3d. were withdrawn early in the month.

Other Fruit.

Representative ranges of prices for other main lines of fruit available were as follow:—Grapefruit: (New South Wales), 4s. to 6s., few special 8s. to 10s.; (Queensland), 10s. to 16s. (few to 20s. early), per bushel case. Strawberries: (Queensland), 15s. to 24s., choice 30s. to 36s., few higher, per dozen packets; 5s. to 7s., choice 8s. to 10s., few to 12s. per tray. Custard Apples: (Queensland), 10s. to 15s., special 16s. to 20s. Avocados: (Queensland), round, 6s. to 10s., few 12s.; Fuerte and similar, 15s. to 25s. per half-case.

VEGETABLES.**Peas Slightly Cheaper Towards Closing.**

Supplies of peas totalled approximately 26,000 bags which was 3,700 more than for the previous month. Rates generally were slightly lower and, although realisations for best lines varied between 22s. and 30s. per bushel according to the quantity forward from day to day, they seldom exceeded 24s. in the latter half of the month. The quality of offerings covered a wide range and medium grades were available from 14s., with inferior lower, at most times. Receipts were mainly from near-metropolitan and northern coastal districts but moderate quantities came to hand from the South Coast.

Lighter Supplies of Beans.

Total consignments of beans from all sources were slightly smaller during July, the 16,800 bags from northern coastal districts of New South Wales being supplemented by 12,300 cases and 2,100 sugar bags from Queensland. A wide variation in quality was apparent, and prices in the main ranged from 6s. to 16s. per bushel with inferior from 2s. On occasions, however, a temporary scarcity caused a sharp rise in rates and best lines brought between 18s. and 22s., whilst on the last day of the month as much as 25s. was realised. A large percentage of receipts from all districts was affected by dry weather conditions in the growing areas, and sellers experienced considerable difficulty in disposing of dry, "curly," and "seedy" lots which were not wanted by the retail trade even at very low prices.

Market Over-Supplied with Queensland Tomatoes.

Stocks of Queensland tomatoes during the period totalled 147,200 half-cases, of which approximately 80 per cent. were from northern districts of that State. Offerings were in excess of the requirements of the retail trade at most times and particularly during the first half of the month. Although a few special northern packs brought from 6s. to 8s. on occasions, a large proportion of sales took place between 2s. and 5s. per half-case. Realisations for south Queensland lots were adversely affected as a result and seldom exceeded 6s. early in the period. Towards closing, however, a slight improvement was evident and as much as 12s. was obtained. Only moderate supplies were forward from districts adjacent to the Sydney Metropolitan Area and realisations for these were well maintained despite the near-glut proportions of interstate offerings. Most quotations ranged from 4s. to 10s., with a few packs to 12s. per half-case but, during the last few days of the period, prices for best lots advanced gradually to 16s. Light consignments were received from the Coff's Harbour region.

Rates for Cabbages Practically Unchanged.

Only moderate supplies of cabbages came to hand in the producers' market on most mornings and realisations generally showed little alteration from those ruling during the previous month, ranging mainly from 3s. to 8s. per dozen. On some days selected large heads brought 10s. and occasionally 12s., but on other occasions sellers found it difficult to obtain more than 6s.

Cauliflowers More Plentiful and Generally Cheaper.

Daily receipts of cauliflowers were slightly larger during July. Early in the month as much as 24s. and occasionally 28s. per dozen was obtained for choice large heads, but the market subsequently declined. Representative prices for the balance of the period ranged mainly from 3s. to 12s., with specially selected large heads 14s. to 18s.

Rates for Lettuce Decline.

Early in the month, the high prices recorded for lettuce during June continued to operate, and up to 14s. per case was obtained. Values subsequently declined, however, to range mainly from 4s. to 8s., with special packs to 10s., and these levels ruled throughout the greater part of the period. On some days, however, due to temporary over-supply, sellers were unable to obtain more than 6s.

Other Main Vegetable Lines.

Closing quotations for other main vegetable lines were:—Celery, (South Australia): 8s. to 16s., few to 20s.; Marrows (Queensland): 6s. to 8s., few 10s. per crate; Carrots: 8s. to 16s., few higher; Parsnips (New South Wales): 8s. to 20s. (early quotations to 28s); (Victorian), 14s. to 22s. (early quotations to 28s); Potatoes (No. 1 Grade): 10s., fixed maximum price; Onions (Victorian Brown), 23s. 6d., fixed maximum price; Swedes, 6s. to 12s. few higher; Pumpkins, 5s. to 8s.; Sweet Potatoes, 10s. to 18s., few 20s. per cwt.; Brussels Sprouts (Victorian), 5s. to 10s., few higher, per 12 lb. box.

T. McKEON.
