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STATE MARKETING BUREAU - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. N.S.W

MONTHLY MARKETING REVIEW

ISSUED BY AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, SYDNEY.

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MONTHLY MARKETING REVIEW.

A miscellany of matters relating to the marketing of primary products, at home and abroad.

Released during the second week of each month.

Issued by authority of the Minister for Agriculture and prepared under the direction of the Director of Marketing in the State Marketing Bureau, Department of Agriculture, New South Wales, Australia.

SUNDRY NOTES.

The world's oldest produce exchange building is in The Hague in the Netherlands. A canal, 20 feet wide, flows right through the middle of its big board room. Its members, sitting in tiered seats on both sides of the waterway, make their bids and buy the fruits and vegetables as the loaded barges sail past. (Readers' Digest).

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A somewhat similar method of selling is in operation on Long Island, New York, where motor lorries containing various classes of vegetables proceed in a long queue before an assemblage of buyers located at a given point. These buyers tender bids as the lorries file slowly past or pull up momentarily if required to do so.

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Among at least three quarters of the people of the world, goods bought and sold seldom have a fixed value. The price paid is determined only after negotiations between buyer and seller. When the parties wish to keep the price a secret, the negotiations are carried on in a finger code under cover. Prices for rugs in Persia and rubies in Burma are settled by the two men squeezing each other's hands beneath a table or a piece of cloth. (Readers' Digest).

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The practice alluded to in the foregoing note is slightly reminiscent of the method of bidding at auction sales of stock at Flemington in New South Wales. There the bidding is silent. The auctioneer and his assistants announce the amounts of the bids and the ultimate realisation, together with the name of the buyer, but bids are made largely by movements of the hands and fingers of the

/bidders....

bidders; the bidding hands are not visible to many of those interested and are probably not intended to be seen or understood by any but the auctioneer and his assistants. A newcomer attending these auction sales with the object of buying - and unfamiliar with the system of bidding - would be somewhat bewildered. The system is of many years' standing and appears to work to the satisfaction of those concerned.

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At the great saleyards in Chicago, U.S.A. (the Union Stock-Yards) cattle are sold by private treaty at per lb. weight. This contrasts strikingly with the Australian system of selling by auction at per beast. The Australian practice of selling by auction is doubtless the saleyard method which will always be preferred by Australian stock-raisers. An opinion expressed to the writer at Chicago was that, in view of the number of cattle yarded there, public auction would be too slow to permit of clearances of the saleyard with the requisite despatch. The question of the relative merits of selling at per lb. weight and per beast is not one that could adequately be discussed in the compass of these notes; it probably will be the subject of an article in a later issue.

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In Scotland a society has been registered called the Progressive Egg Producers (Ltd.) for the marketing of eggs of guaranteed quality in non-returnable cartons. It has been promoted by the Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society and it is believed that the scheme of the society, which is a voluntary one, will appeal particularly to small-holders and other small producers, who often experience difficulty in obtaining satisfactory outlets for their produce. (Weekly Scotsman).

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The use of cartons in connection with the sale of eggs has not made much headway in New South Wales. The Egg Marketing Board has given practical encouragement and a few private firms are using them, but anything of the nature of the widespread demand for eggs in cartons to be met with in parts of Canada and the United States is not in evidence here.

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Egg cartons serve several purposes. Whether packed in a central depot, or on the farm, they enable the identity of the packer, or of the packing organisation to be associated with the eggs. In connection with such commodities as tea, jam or herrings,

/the housewife...

the housewife requires the package or container to carry the name of the individual or firm responsible for the contents: the sale of eggs in cartons would enable her to extend the same requirement to that commodity. Egg cartons would also carry a statement as to whether the eggs within were full or medium size and would permit of that inestimable boon, <u>a certificate of freshness</u>.

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Other purposes served by the use of cartons would be those of greater safety and convenience. Placing them loose in a paper bag emphasises and not infrequently proves the fragility of eggs. Packed in cartons, they may be placed in a carry-all, or otherwise carried home with ease and without serious risk of breakage. Eggs in cartons are also much safer in the pantry. The percentage of eggs lost en route to and in the home through accidental breakage is not inconsiderable and it is worthy of note that, at retail prices frequently ruling, one wasted egg would more than pay the charge for a carton.

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The stated objection of the average New South Wales housewife to egg cartons is that they would mean added cost to her, however little. She has yet seriously to consider the countervailing advantages. That she has not yet done so noticeably, is indication of a number of things - among them, the need for salesmanship definitely directed to establishing the value of cartons to both consumers and retailers, bearing in mind that if the retail grocers be convinced, the battle is more than half-won. That there is benefit to producers in the system of selling eggs in cartons is evidenced by its continued appeal to poultry-farmers' selling organisations in U.S.A. and Canada and by the movement in Scotland mentioned earlier.

A.A.W.

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The London "Times" recently published a survey by the Oxford Agricultural Economics Research Institute of the factors affecting the prices and production of eggs.

In referring to egg consumption in the United Kingdom it was stated that "the rate of consumption is still considerably below that in other countries with a standard of living little different from our own, and the consumption of eggs in the higher income groups in this country is considerably above the average, so that consumption a head may increase as standards of living rise".

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THE SHEEP AND WOOL INDUSTRY IN AUSTRALIA.

The following is the second of a series of articles devoted to the sheep and wool industry in Australia. In the first, the early history and development of this, our most important primary industry, was traced, while this article is largely given over to a discussion of various aspects such as the changes in the type of sheep, the various breeds kept in New South Wales and the wool marketing system.

The weight of wool per sheep has increased since the early days of the Colony when the pure Spanish Merino cut 2 to 3 lb. of wool per sheep. By 1880 the average for Australia was 5.4 lb. and in 1927 and 1929 it reached 8.53 lb. per sheep, while in 1935 it was 7.75 lb. It may be mentioned that the average fluctuates considerably due to seasonal conditions, a droughty season producing a marked decrease in the average weight per sheep.

The decrees of fashion have at times had an important bearing on this great industry, resulting in noticeable changes in the type of sheep. As an example the introduction of the Vermont type of Merino may be mentioned, when many of the noted breeders changed from the plain bodied class of animal to one carrying as many wrinkles as it was possible to have. Largely owing to the blow fly pest which takes heavier toll on wrinkly sheep and also to the fact that excessive wrinkles mean greater unevenness in the fleece, present day Merino types are inclined to be more or less plain bodied.

With the advance of agriculture other changes took place. So far as this State is concerned, up to the year 1900 practically all the sheep were Merinos, only 7% being of other blood. As farming pursuits extended, the percentage of British breeds and crossbreds increased until in 1921-22 the percentage of these breeds was 26.8. Fluctuations in wool prices, however, were responsible for increasing the percentage in favour of the Merino to 90.3% in 1929, and it has remained constant, with slight variations, ever since.

The Merino, of course, holds pride of place in the Australian wool industry. In addition, the following breeds are kpet:-

Long wools:

- Lincoln
- English Leicester
- Border Leicester
- Romney Marsh

Short wools:

- Southdown
- Dorset Horn
- Ryeland
- Shropshire
- Suffolk

/In....

In pre-war days wool was sold by public auction in the principal cities of the Commonwealth. In New South Wales the wool was forwarded by growers to brokers in Sydney. The brokers provided showrooms where a proportion of each lot to be offered was made available for inspection and valuation by buyers. Sales were conducted in the Sydney Wool Exchange where buyers representing both local and overseas firms competed with each other. A reserve was placed on each lot by the broker and the highest bidder, provided this reserve was reached, was declared the purchaser. In the event of the reserve not being reached, the lot was passed in, the highest bidder having prior right of purchase by private treaty.

During the latter years of the world war, the British Government undertook through the Commonwealth Government the purchase of the total Australian wool clip for seasons 1916-17 (part), 1917-18, 1918-19 and 1919-20 at the flat rate of 15½d per lb. At the termination of this agreement on 30th June, 1920, the Imperial Government found itself with large stocks of surplus wool. Under the agreement, the growers of the Commonwealth were to receive 50% of the profits on any wool sold to civilians and in order to dispose of that portion which had been acquired by the Central Wool Council on account of Australian growers, the British Australian Wool Realisation Association was formed, being registered under the Victorian Companies Act on 27th January, 1921. This Association had a capital of £22,000,000 of which the major portion was subscribed by Australian woolgrowers. There was an Australian board of six members and a London board of five members, with the head office in Melbourne.

Besides undertaking the disposal of that part of the surplus belonging to Australian growers, "B.A.W.R.A." was appointed by the British Government to dispose of the British share of the surplus and also stocks of New Zealand and South African wool held by that Government.

B.A.W.R.A. had to contend with a rapidly falling market, and in order that an equitable price might be obtained for the current season's wool an arrangement was made whereby two bales of the season's clip should be sold for every one bale of the surplus wool. Under this arrangement, the final bales of the surplus were disposed of on 2nd May, 1924.

In 1922 Sir J.M. Higgins, Government Nominee and Chairman of Directors of B.A.W.R.A. suggested at a meeting of shareholders that the association be kept in existence to be used as a potential factor in the stabilization of markets for all forms of primary produce. This suggestion was not acceptable to shareholders and as a consequence the association went into liquidation on 10th June, 1926.

/Since ....

Since the dissolution of B.A.W.R.A. wool selling has reverted to sales by public auction in capital cities and several of the large country towns. The season opens in the Spring (September) with wool from our warmer districts and as the wool is sold in the order of its arrival into store, the first sales comprise wool mostly medium to strong in quality, the fine wools present being principally the result of dry conditions and are termed "hungry fine". To allow a proportion of fine free wools to come on the market as early in the season as possible, what is termed "the Zone System" has been introduced. By this system Merino wools grown in certain specified fine wool-growing areas of the State are lotted for sale immediately on arrival into store. This gives the buyers a chance to begin filling orders for fine wool reasonably early in the season.

The following are the principal firms engaged in selling wool in Sydney:-

	Office.	Wool Store.
Australian Mercantile Land & Finance Co. Ltd.	4 Bligh Street.	Pyrmont.
Commonwealth Wool & Produce Co. Ltd.	89 Philip Street.	Wattle Street, Pyrmont.
Country Producers' Selling Co. Ltd.	26 Bridge Street.	Bulwarra Road, Pyrmont.
Dalgety & Co. Ltd.	15 Bent Street.	Miller's Point.
Farmers' & Graziers' Co-op. Grain & Insurance Agency Co. Ltd.	Circular Quay.	Pyrmont.
Goldsbrough, Mort & Co. Ltd.	Macquarie Place.	Pyrmont.
New Zealand Loan & Mercantile Agency Co. Ltd.	38 Bridge Street.	Ultimo.
Pitt, Son & Badgery Ltd.	4 O'Connell St.	Harris Street, Pyrmont.
Primary Producers' Wool & Produce Selling Co. Ltd.	9 Young Street.	Windmill Street, Miller's Point.
Winchcombe, Carson Ltd.	48 Bridge Street.	Pyrmont.
Schute Bell, Badgery, Lumby Ltd.	44 Bridge Street.	Pyrmont.

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The following schedule sets out the quantity and estimated value of wool produced each year since the beginning of the present century:-

Year	New South Wales		Australia	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
	lb.	£	lb.	£
1901	310,075,000	9,299,000	539,395,000	15,834,000
1902	217,411,000	7,464,000	408,302,000	13,677,000
1903	227,004,000	8,731,000	410,388,000	15,124,000
1904	250,941,000	9,416,000	470,402,000	18,140,000
1905	297,154,000	12,669,000	516,721,000	21,273,000
1906	325,441,000	14,512,000	570,734,000	24,266,000
1907	367,446,000	17,590,000	682,361,000	30,515,000
1908	349,782,000	13,293,000	647,416,000	24,366,000
1909	401,601,000	14,368,000	740,250,000	27,825,000
1910-11	402,334,000	14,215,000	787,529,000	28,078,000
1o11-12	404,655,000	13,514,000	798,391,000	26,711,000
1912-13	326,557,000	13,401,000	687,486,000	26,598,000
1913-14	379,450,000	14,265,000	771,309,000	28,605,000
1914-15	369,414,000	12,228,000	734,828,000	25,133,000
1915-16	306,205,000	14,362,000	636,275,000	31,227,000
1916-17	318,241,000	20,882,000	636,590,000	41,840,000
1917-18	322,855,000	22,102,000	654,444,000	45,076,000
1918-19	340,953,000	22,702,000	736,415,000	50,704,000
1919-20	352,071,000	23,615,000	762,104,000	52,940,000
1920-21	275,269,000	15,797,000	625,198,000	37,636,000
1921-22	333,856,000	17,931,000	723,059,000	39,576,000
1922-23	336,899,000	25,107,000	726,684,000	55,607,000
1923-24	303,032,000	30,160,000	662,597,000	66,451,000
1924-25	369,118,000	38,141,000	776,882,000	81,430,000
1925-26	402,490,000	30,188,000	833,739,000	61,633,000
1926-27	499,322,000	38,144,000	924,411,000	69,430,000
1927-28	443,860,000	37,924,000	888,130,000	75,634,000
1928-29	484,754,000	35,902,000	968,153,000	70,833,000
1929-30	461,853,000	22,349,000	938,498,000	44,222,000
1930-31	428,752,000	16,685,000	912,941,000	34,803,500
1931-32	503,275,000	17,489,000	1,007,455,000	35,073,500
1932-33	533,710,000	19,080,000	1,062,623,000	38,599,500
1933-34	486,152,000	32,005,009	995,931,000	63,036,858
1934-35	496,877,000	19,902,936	1,015,424,000	40,446,383
1935-36 ø	472,585,000	27,567,000	991,708,452	57,890,981

Extracted from Commonwealth Production Bulletins. Some discrepancies exist between these figures and those shown in Commonwealth Year Books due to varying methods of collecting earlier returns but, the Commonwealth Statistician has issued the above figures as being the most authentic. Figures for years 1901 to 1909 in calender years and from 1910 onwards for year ending 30th June. Prior to 1931-32 estimated value of production based on export values. From 1932 values based on annual average price realised at main selling centres. ø Estimated.

EXPORTS OF MACARONI FROM NEW SOUTH WALES - IS AN EXPANSION LIKELY?

Exports of macaroni and related products such as vermicelli, from New South Wales, have shown a substantial increase during recent years, reaching a total of 41,141 lb. in 1935/36.

An examination of the appended schedule, however, discloses that the exports from this State form but a small proportion of the total shipped overseas from Australia each year, the great bulk of this trade being in the hands of Victorian interests.

The exports of macaroni and vermicelli from Australia have been largely to New Zealand over quite a number of years. Under the Australia-New Zealand Trade Agreement which came into effect on 1st December, 1933, and is still in force, macaroni is admitted into New Zealand from Australia free of duties. Formerly a 30% import duty operated to the disadvantage of Australian manufacturers, the product of other countries being allowed entry at a considerably lower rate. It is doubtful, however, whether the New Zealand market is capable of any further expansion. Experimental shipments of macaroni and similar products have been forwarded from Australia at different times to such places as Java, Singapore and Fiji, but it was difficult to overcome competition from old established brands, which usually were of an inferior quality and therefore cheaper than the Australian products. It would appear that there is a large market in the United Kingdom for macaroni, etc., but it is being successfully exploited by foreign countries.

Some years ago the Development Branch of the Prime Minister's Department, published the results of investigations made regarding the manufacture of macaroni in Victoria. It was stated that the main difficulty with which manufacturers were faced was the lack of supplies of high quality Durum wheat from local sources. Tests made by the Victorian Department of Agriculture showed that macaroni (Durum) types of wheat are very low yielding compared with the usual white wheats grown in Australia. Consequently farmers are not inclined to grow Durum wheat unless definitely assured of being able to dispose of it at a substantial premium over the higher yielding white wheats. It is understood the Victorian Department of Agriculture is conducting experiments with a view to developing a higher-yielding, high-class Durum wheat.

The Director of Plant Breeding, Department of Agriculture, Sydney, recently stated that wheats of the pure Durum type are not grown commercially in New South Wales at present. He points out that, for export, only very high class macaroni can compete with

/the Italian....

the Italian product, and it is for this reason that this State will not be able to enter into competition with other States until such time as macaroni wheats are grown here on a commercial scale.

The following schedule gives particulars regarding exports during the last six years:-

Macaroni and Vermicelli.

Year	Exports from N.S.W. lb.	Exports from Victoria. lb.	Exports from Australia. lb.
1930/31	5,124	362,277	367,401
1931/32	8,645	646,932	665,663
1932/33	28,938	952,423	987,293
1933/34	20,606	522,296	543,438
1934/35	23,410	504,735	529,149
1935/36	41,141	607,282	672,307

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LIGHTER SUPPLIES OF SHEEP AND LAMBS PENNED AT HOMEBUSH - CATTLE MORE PLENTIFUL.

Although the early part of the month of May was marked by relatively heavy yardings of sheep and lambs, the number coming forward towards the end of the period showed a considerable falling off. This is evidenced by the fact that actual supplies comprised 341,041 or some 50,000 head less than April's pennings.

Early in May saw the chain or team system of slaughtering introduced in the mutton section of the Homebush Bay Abattoirs and while at this stage its adoption has not been general, it is expected that in time all killing of mutton and lamb will be carried out by this method. Although only in use for a short while, the work on the chain has moved along satisfactorily.

The condition of the sheep and lambs yarded showed to a large degree the difficult time being experienced in many of the pastoral areas in regard to feed. Plain, i.e. poor quality, sheep and lambs have been well in evidence, although at times good quality lines have been available, principally from districts where the grazing areas are in fair to good condition. It is apparent at this stage that with the slackening-off of the numbers yarded, graziers have reduced the sheep and lambs on their holdings to such numbers as can be safely carried through the winter, having in view the season's lamb drop and the ensuing wool clip.

/On ....

On several sale days drafts of very early genuine sucker lambs were offered; they were eagerly sought after by the trade and commanded high prices, reaching the satisfactory figure of $6\frac{1}{4}$d per lb. on the hoof. The market for grown sheep was somewhat irregular, but generally values appreciated, best quality wether mutton in places advancing as much as $\frac{3}{4}$d per lb., although in most instances a rise of from $\frac{1}{4}$d to $\frac{1}{2}$d per lb. occurred. Rates for ewes were from $2\frac{1}{4}$d to $2\frac{3}{4}$d per lb. and wethers $2\frac{1}{2}$d to $3\frac{1}{4}$d per lb. at the end of the month. Prices ranged from 20/- to 28/- per head for good wethers with consignments of outstanding quality wethers selling to 34/- per head; ewes sold at from 14/- to 21/- per head, but in places prime, big-framed ewes carrying a very good skin sold to 26/- per head. The general range of prices for good quality lambs was from 20/- to 28/- per head with some lines selling at higher rates and making from $4\frac{3}{4}$d to 6d per lb. on the hoof according to weight and quality.

The market was somewhat disorganised owing to an industrial dispute at the Homebush Abattoirs, when sheep and lambs penned for sale on the 24th May, 1937, could not be sold and were disposed of on the 26th May, 1937, two days later. Although fed and watered, the sheep and lambs lost a good deal of condition owing to being held for the extra two days and values depreciated somewhat.

The skin market, which is reflected in the prices paid for sheep and lambs, is still fairly high, but rates are not at such high levels as at the close of April. This is due to a weak market during the last sale of skins held in May, when rates were from $\frac{1}{2}$d to 1d and often $1\frac{1}{2}$d per lb. lower than those ruling during the preceding week.

Heavy consignments of cattle continued to come forward, the total number for May being slightly more than for April, reaching the high figure of 33,000 head, which is well over 13,000 more than were yarded for the same period last year. Store stock included in the supply accounted for 3,013 while Queensland cattle were just short of a thousand. Poor grazing conditions in most districts were, in the main, responsible for the substantial increase.

A very large percentage of the cattle yarded could only be described as forward stores and many drafts of well bred prime sorts were showing definite signs of wasting; some owners, however, seem to have good cattle on hand as limited numbers were available at several sales.

Weighty cattle were generally scarce, medium and light bullocks and steers forming the greater proportion of each day's

/offering....

offering, but in the majority of cases they lacked quality and seldom more than 25/- to 27/- per 100 lb. of beef was realised. Buyers, however, were prepared to pay much higher prices for good to prime sorts, medium weight bullocks and steers of this description being worth from 30/- to 32/- per 100 lb. on the hoof.

On odd occasions, some particularly good lots of well-bred cows and heifers in prime condition were on offer. The demand for these was always satisfactory, but price realizations were not in every case as high as might be expected. The large numbers of plain cows and heifers available met with indifferent enquiry, some lots selling at lower levels than for some time.

Very few good vealers were yarded; most of those supplied showed the effect of seasonal conditions already referred to.

G.C. & A.T.

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TRADING IN FRUIT AND VEGETABLES AT THE CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

There were no outstanding features in the fruit market during the month of May, trading for the most part being of a steady nature. Although sales were by no means brisk, clearances of the better quality fruit were satisfactory. Inferior descriptions, on the other hand, were found to be difficult to dispose of.

May saw the end of the season for Valencia oranges, only small quantities from late, isolated areas such as Kurrajong Heights being available. This fruit was disposed of at satisfactory prices, it being preferred, early in the month, to the new-season Navels, which at that time were somewhat lacking in colour and sugar content. The quality of the Navels improved rapidly, however, and there was a progressive daily increase in the quantity coming to hand until at the close of the month ample stocks of choice fruit, drawn from both coastal and inland districts were available. In addition to local supplies, small consignments were received from Queensland.

A review of crop conditions indicates that the main crop of Navels will be light in practically all the principal producing areas of the State. Dry weather has been experienced throughout New South Wales, but the fruit in most districts has attained large size and is reported to be of good quality both as regards fineness of skin and juice content.

/Prices....

Prices ruling at the beginning of the month ranged from 5/- to 10/- per case according to size and quality, but a slight downward trend in values was noticeable as quantities increased. Large fruit was somewhat slow of sale, buyers evincing a marked preference for counts per case of 138 to 150, these sizes yielding a reasonable margin of profit when retailed at 1/- per dozen.

Limited quantities of common oranges, chiefly of the White Siletta and Joppa varieties, were also received. The quality of this fruit was much better than at the corresponding period of last year and the prices obtained were relatively higher.

Emperor mandarins were received in small quantities during the second week of May and experienced a good inquiry at satisfactory rates, the bulk of the sales being effected at 7/- and 9/- with odd sales at 10/- per case. Supplies subsequently increased considerably, but a steady demand was maintained and values remained firm. Towards the close of May some small consignments of extra choice fruit of the Glen Retreat variety came to hand from one of the best producing districts of Queensland and were cleared at 14/- to 16/- per case.

Lemons were heavily supplied and included consignments from Queensland and Victoria. Owing to a very limited demand, prices were reduced considerably, but vendors found it impossible to effect clearances. Small and inferior lines and fruit lacking in colour were practically unsaleable. There was an extensive accumulation of stocks, which agents were forced to "pick over" periodically as the result of blue mould infection, in order to avoid a total loss.

Cool stores in the apple and pear growing districts of New South Wales as well as those situated in the city were still filled to capacity and growers seemed disinclined to release their Fancy and Extra Fancy grade apples in any appreciable quantity at the ruling values, with the result that the market was over-supplied with lower grade fruit which was difficult to move. The receipt of a heavy shipment from Tasmania early in the month totalling 50,379 cases was responsible for the depreciation of values by from 6d to 1/- per case. For the most part, however, there was a steady demand for choice, coloured varieties, particularly Jonathan and values were maintained on a fairly steady level. Buyers showed a preference for fruit of New South Wales origin, but choice lots from interstate sources also cleared well. There was only a limited call for cooking varieties such as French Crab and rates remained relatively low. Fancy and Extra Fancy grade local Granny Smiths, however, were more in favour and cleared more freely with some lines suitable for shipping purposes selling well.

/Shipments....

Shipments from Tasmania varied between about 30,000 and 60,000 cases, the aggregate for the month being 186,330 cases. (including pears). Limited quantities were also received from Victoria.

Pears were released from cool storage in moderate quantities enabling agents to maintain values. There was a good demand for quality descriptions throughout, with Winter Cole and Packham's Triumph, which were preferred by buyers, showing an improvement in prices towards the end of the month.

Passion-fruit were fairly plentiful but values for choice quality lots remained nominally steady. Owing to satisfactory prices ruling on the Brisbane market supplies were not as heavy as they would otherwise have been as the Queensland production was disposed of in that State while a number of New South Wales growers were induced to forward consignments to the northern capital.

Arrivals of bananas for the month totalled 43,041 cases of which 36,246 were produced in New South Wales and 6,795 in Queensland. The market was easier at the beginning of May but subsequently recovered and values then remained fairly steady. A quantity of bushel cases (about 200) were included in the Queensland consignment for the week ended 8th May, and in a subsequent report by the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing the following comment appeared:- "Opinions are divided as to the suitability of the bushel case for bananas, and, as yet, no definite ruling could be given on the advisability of its universal adoption".

The bulk of the pineapples totalling nearly 6,000 cases received from Queensland consisted of rather large fruit, most counts per case being under twenty, which made it difficult to maintain values, as the popular sizes with buyers are 21 to 24. Rates were well maintained, however, until the last week of the month when owing to a quiet demand prices fell from 8/- to 15/- to 7/- to 12/- per tropical case.

Custard apples were also received in fairly large quantities, the total for the month totalling 3,931 half-cases. Clearances were effected at nominally steady prices ranging from 3/- to 6/- per half-case.

Papawa, which were in moderate supply were in request during the first three weeks and up to 20/- per case was obtained for choice, well-coloured fruit. These high prices, however, induced growers to increase supplies to such an extent that they could not be maintained.

/Supplies....

Supplies of peas varied throughout the month from light to fairly heavy but were for the most part moderate. Inland districts contributed the greater proportion, but frosts in most of the producing centres affected the quality of the peas to a certain extent. Supplies were also drawn from coastal areas, some eatra choice "Gems" being produced in the Gosford-Wamberal-Terrigal districts. Opening sales for the month were effected at higher rates owing to the relatively light supplies, but clearances were not satisfactory and values later depreciated to 3/6 to 5/- per bushel, with some sales of extra choice higher. For the next two weeks a steady upward trend in prices was apparent particularly for choice local "Gems" which were sought after by buyers, up to 9/- per bushel being obtained. Subsequently, however, there was a marked falling off in demand and prices were reduced by about 1/- per bushel.

Beans for the first half of the month were fairly plentiful but only a comparatively small proportion of the available supplies was of choice quality, the bulk being rather dry and curly and obviously showing the effects of the dry weather. Inferior and medium lots were neglected by buyers while prices generally were low, the greater volume of sales being effected at from 1/- to 4/- with a few extra choice to 5/- per bushel. Subsequently frost took a rather heavy toll of local beans and there was a marked falling off in the quantities received. Choice lines were in request at advanced rates, up to 9/- per bushel being obtained. During the latter part of May local supplies were supplemented by consignments of about 100 bags and 350 bags from the North Coast, while the first of the Queensland beans (61 cases) came to hand. Prices of choice lots remained fairly steady although a weaker tendency prevailed generally.

Cabbages were well supplied but quality 'heads' cleared steadily, and while fluctuations within narrow limits were apparent, values were well maintained at prices ranging from 2/- to 6/- per dozen according to size and quality.

Cauliflowers for the most part were heavily stocked and were drawn from inland districts. The majority of the flowers were of small to medium size owing to the dry weather conditions prevailing in the producing areas, otherwise the quality on the whole was very good. Vendors found it difficult to clear stocks early in the month and prices were considerably reduced. Subsequently, however, an improved demand was experienced and choice lines moved out freely at advanced rates up to 12/- per dozen being obtained for the best quality descriptions.

Bunched vegetables were heavily supplied and all kinds were cheaper; values of most lines, however, with the exception of carrots and parsnips had recovered to some extent towards the end of the month.

/Decreasing....

Decreasing quantities of local tomatoes were supplemented during the latter part of the period under review by consignments from Queensland aggregating in the vicinity of 3,000 half-cases. The Irrigation Area and the Gosford district contributed largely to the available stocks. Prices at the beginning of the month were relatively low but a gradual upward trend was apparent to the end of the third week when up to 11/- per half-case was obtained for some extra choice locals. The market weakened perceptibly on receipt of the Queensland consignments and values declined by about 2/- per half-case.

Hardstuffs such as swedes, sweet potatoes and potatoes, met a limited inquiry and were cleared at relatively low prices. Small quantities of local new potatoes came to hand and realised from 2/6 to 4/6 per quarter.

Victorian Brussels Sprouts reached the market in moderate quantities and also some small consignments from New South Wales growers. Victorian lots realised from 5/- to 6/- per 12 lb. box, while those from New South Wales, which were of somewhat inferior quality compared with those from the Southern State, cleared at from 3/- to 5/- per dozen lb.

E.J.C.

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TEAM SYSTEM OF SLAUGHTERING.

In the mutton and lamb section at the Homebush Bay Abattoirs, New South Wales, the first chain for the killing of sheep and lambs was brought into operation early in May, the work on the chain being carried out by employees of the Meat Industry Commission.

The System has been in operation for some years in Victoria and practically every freezing works and abattoirs in New Zealand kills in this manner. The following should give some idea of the operation of the System in New Zealand. Special iron hooks are placed around the shanks of the live animal and the other end of these hooks is placed into a D which protrudes from a large wheel which is vertical, revolves slowly and hoists the lamb up and on to the chain or overhead conveyor. The slaughtering pen in most freezing works is about 25 ft. long by 12 ft. wide. The chain moves the animal slowly across the pen and it is slaughtered while hanging from the chain. The jugular vein is severed, representing departure from the old method of cutting the throat, with the result that by the time the lambs reach the end of the slaughtering pen they are ready for dressing; the blood is removed by specially constructed drains.

/The....

The chain, which is of the endless type, is regulated in speed according to the number of men employed in the team, which varies in size according to the type of machinery in use and the size of the freezing works or abattoirs. The slaughtermen stand about two yards apart and, instead of killing and dressing the whole sheep, each man specialises in one or two operations while the carcases are moving slowly past his position on the floor. One man commences by opening the skin inside the hind legs, the next man dresses one hind leg the next the other hind leg, another cleans the flanks, while others either punch the brisket, remove the head or skin or open up the carcase, and other operations are carried on down the chain until the carcase is completely dressed. Under this system, it is stated, a team of 28 men could dress from 2,500 to 3,000 lambs per day or approximately 100 lambs per man.

It is claimed in New Zealand that the Chain System possesses many advantages over the old method of slaughtering, among which the following are quoted:-

(1) better dressing of carcases;

(2) the skins, heads and offal are removed at each particular section of the chain and conveyed by shutes in the floor to other parts of the works for further treatment, a considerable saving in time and labour being effected;

(3) the cleaning after slaughtering is easier;

(4) the by-products such as tallow, etc., are kept cleaner, which improves their quality and grade.

At one of the large freezing works in New Zealand where two overhead chains are in use, 60 men are employed on each chain which together are capable of handling 14,000 carcases per day, but as some of the men engaged are novices, the output is from 10,000 to 12,000 carcases daily.

At this stage in New South Wales it is too early to comment extensively on the system, but representatives of the trade and other interests who have witnessed the chain in operation are most appreciative of the class of work carried out, special comment being made as to the improvement in the value of skins taken off under this method of slaughtering.

G.C.

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Another successful season has been experienced by rice growers on the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and a record crop, estimated at 42,000 tons of paddy rice, is confidently anticipated by the Rice Marketing Board. The value will probably be in the vicinity of £375,000.

COMPETITION FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM BUTTER MARKET.

The following figures relating to the total imports of butter to the United Kingdom during the years 1934 to 1936 will give an indication of the keen competition between various nations for the United Kingdom butter market. It also emphasises the necessity for Australian exporters to forward consignments of only the best quality, if increases of our butter exports are to be continued. The falling off in the Australian exports in 1936 is attributable to adverse seasonal conditions in a number of the main dairying districts, resulting in a serious decline in output.

IMPORTS OF BUTTER TO THE UNITED KINGDOM.

EXPORTING COUNTRY	YEAR		
	1934	1935	1936
	cwts.	cwts.	cwts.
Irish Free State	468,381	488,467	468,272
Union of South Africa	21,423	82,349	75,498
Australia	2,103,366	2,113,408	1,694,222
New Zealand	2,676,794	2,637,502	2,791,914
Other British Countries	13,826	113,427	107,119
Soviet Union	491,470	503,192	415,055
Finland	150,849	115,707	159,761
Estonia	122,919	119,343	116,329
Latvia	155,756	192,336	196,396
Lithunia	141,101	180,667	210,842
Sweden	302,296	184,285	149,443
Denmark	2,485,810	2,186,350	2,170,542
Poland	50,163	99,158	188,954
Netherlands	301,137	463,811	746,101
Argentine Republic	111,546	68,964	142,528
Other Foreign Countries	98,557	59,050	119,067
	9,695,394	9,608,016	9,752,043

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At the final meeting of the Wine Grapes Marketing Board for the financial year ending 30th June, 1936, it was announced that the production of wine grapes for the year, viz. 16,000 tons, would constitute a record for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. The value of this production amounts to over £90,000.

COLD STORAGE OF VEGETABLES.

At the recently held conference of vegetable growers, an interesting and informative address relative to the cold storing of vegetables was given by Mr. W.J. Williams, Superintendent of Markets, Sydney. Although space will not permit of details being published in respect of the different kinds of vegetables, it is possible to outline some of the main features.

Mr. Williams stated that the object of cold storage is to prevent the vegetables from drying and shrivelling and to stop the development of moulds and rots which cause much deterioration and loss of food values.

All vegetables should be absolutely fresh when packed. When they are in this condition they contain the full amount of vitality and, generally speaking, the best flavour.

Care and consideration must be given to temperature, humidity and ventilation. The temperature, of course, will regulate the rate of respiration. The humidity will control the shrivelling and shrinking and, at the same time, do much to keep the freshness and flavour of the vegetables. A continued supply of fresh air is vital and, if possible, the air should be drawn in from the outside source rather than the method which is in use, that is, cleaning the air over brine coils. Great care should be taken to see that all vegetables are thoroughly dry before they are placed in the cold store, otherwise rot and mould will develop.

It must be borne in mind that, when vegetables are placed in cold storage, there is always a loss in weight which will be due to two causes - (1) respiration, and (2) loss of moisture. Unless care is exercised in control of temperature and humidity, there must be shrinkage which means a loss in weight. This loss will, of course, vary according to the variety of vegetable. Carrots lost as much as 10% over a period of 10 months while Red Beet lost up to 20% over a period of 4 months.

To prevent this loss and wilting in the appearance of the vegetables, it will generally be necessary to raise the humidity and at the same time decrease the temperature. This can only be a general statement and it will be essential always to test each variety to find out what is the best humidity and the most satisfactory temperature. Mould control is always difficult the nearer the humidity reaches 100%.

/The ....

The freezing points of the different kinds of vegetables are as follow:-

Asparagus	.. 32 degrees		Parsnips	.. 29 degrees	
Beans	.. 32	"	Peas	.. 31	"
Cabbage	.. 31	"	Rhubarb	.. 29	"
Cauliflower	.. 31	"	Turnips	.. 30	"
Carrots	.. 29	"	Tomatoes	.. 31.5	"
Cucumbers	.. 31	"	Onions	.. 29	"
Lettuce	.. 31	"	Potatoes	.. 29.5	"

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EXPORT OF PANNICUM SEED.

Pannicum (Setaria Italica), which is also known as Hungarian Millet, is a special bird seed.

The representative of one of the largest seed importing firms in New Zealand recently approached the State Marketing Bureau with a view to being put in touch with organisations representing growers or producers of this seed. The firm in question, which at present imports pannicum from Manchuria, owing to the unsuitability of the New Zealand climate for its production, expressed a desire to obtain supplies in Australia.

The seed is largely produced in Queensland but the New Zealand regulations provide that it can only enter the Dominion upon the production of a certificate that it has been consigned from an area which is free from cattle ticks. As cattle ticks are known to exist in Queensland and on the North Coast of New South Wales it was impossible to place an order in those areas. Inquiries were instituted and a grower was located in a tick-free district in the North West of the State who had a large quantity of seed for sale. Negotiations, with this Bureau as intermediary, have resulted in an order being placed for the purchase of 30 tons of dressed pannicum seed. This quantity apparently does not entirely satisfy the requirements of the New Zealand firm referred to and possibly opportunities are awaiting other growers of this commodity for its regular disposal across the Tasman.

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BREAD - WORLD PRICES.

A recent issue of "Milling", a publication devoted to matters relating to that industry in the United Kingdom, gives very interesting information as to the price of bread in various countries of the world, based on details furnished by an economist.

It is shown that, with the exception of Argentine, Poland and Belgium, the price of bread in Britain is still lower than in most other countries. What is more, British bread is claimed to be of superior quality.

The following table shows the price of the 2 lb. loaf, the annual per capita consumption of wheat, the population, and the production of wheat, averaged during 1933/35, for the countries named:-

WHEAT:

Country	Price in pence	Consumption in bushels	Population in millions	Production in million bushels
Argentine	3	5.9	10.9	223.0
Poland	3½	1.9	30.0	76.0
Great Britain	4¾	5.7	40.1	49.7
I.F.S.	5¼	6.7	2.9	4.1
Australia	5½	7.2	6.3	155.8
Bulgaria	5½	5.9	5.7	47.6
Canada	6	10.1	9.7	276.7
France	6½	5.1	41.0	326.6
Sth. Africa	7	1.6	9.5	15.2
New Zealand	7½	5.4	1.6	7.8
U.S.A.	8	5.1	120.7	542.7

MIXED:

Country	Price in pence	Consumption in bushels	Population in millions	Production in million bushels
Czecho-Slovakia	2¾	4.3	14.5	61.7
Hungary	4	5.6	8.6	78.3
Jugoslavia	4½	4.3	13.4	76.0
Turkey	4½	5.8	14.5	97.0
Austria	6	4.0	6.7	14.5
Greece	6	4.8	6.3	28.3
Germany	6	2.8	64.0	181.4

Prices have been averaged where more than one was obtainable in a country and currencies converted into sterling at current rates. "Wheat", noted marginally, indicates that wheat flour is used wholly in the countries named, while "mixed" would convey that wheat flour is merely a constituent and that rye, barley, rice, buckwheat, peas, potatoes and beans are other components which are regularly prescribed by the governments of the countries named.

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EGG PULP - QUESTION OF IMPORTATION FROM CHINA.

A report that an application had recently been made by certain interests for permission to import Chinese egg pulp into Victoria under special duty concession evoked a good deal of adverse criticism, particularly from those engaged in egg production in this State.

The Egg Producers' Council of New South Wales communicated with the Comptroller-General of Customs on the matter, stating, inter alia, that although it was difficult to believe that such an application would be favourably entertained, prompt refusal was warranted in view of the difficult times the egg industry is passing through. The unhygienic conditions under which poultry-farming is carried on in China were also advanced as an additional reason why egg pulp from that country should not be admitted.

Support was accorded by the Minister for Agriculture (Hon. Hugh Main, M.L.A.) who, in a letter to the Minister for Customs, pointed out that in view of the conditions at present existing in the poultry industry and the severe disorganisation that would follow if Chinese egg-pulp were admitted, he was strongly of opinion that it would be most inadvisable for such action to be taken. In reply, the Minister for Trade and Customs now states that there is no embargo on the importation of egg-pulp into Australia, provided shipments are accompanied by a certificate to the satisfaction of the Department from the health authority in the district in which the material is prepared, that certain conditions have been complied with. Egg-pulp, however, is subject to a very high rate of duty under the Customs Tariff, which virtually constitutes prohibition. Nevertheless, a recent request made to him for the admission of quantities of egg-pulp from China at concessional rates of duty under Departmental By-Law had been refused.

The foregoing should be pleasing news to those engaged in poultry farming in Australia, who are no doubt in a position to meet all domestic demands for this commodity.

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A report issued by the Imperial Economic Committee on World Consumption of Wool in 1936 states that a feature of the year was the improved demand for crossbred wools, and the relatively high prices obtained for them as compared with Merinos. A definite scarcity developed in the lower qualities, which may be partly attributed to the increased demand for uniform cloths, the general fashion trend towards woollen goods, the utilisation of crossbreds in Coronation decoration goods in the United Kingdom and the substitution for Merinos in fixed price goods as wool values hardened.

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SALES OF FARM PRODUCE AT THE ALEXANDRIA RAILWAY GOODS YARD AND IN SUSSEX STREET, SYDNEY.

The general quality of locally grown potatoes at Alexandria continued to improve during the month of May, and many lines, especially from the Crookwell and Taralga districts, were of an exceptionally high standard. Seed buyers, in anticipation of the fresh plantings which are due to start in coastal areas during the next month, were particularly active. Under the influence of keenly competitive bidding at auction, prices for seed grade were at all times during May in advance of those realised for choice table tubers. Realisations for seed ranged from £3.10.0 to £6.16.8 per ton at auction, whilst those of table potatoes were from £3.5.0 to £6.1.8. Supplies were a little heavier and totalled 8,591 bags. The rain received in the potato-growing areas during the month was not sufficient to prevent the spread of grub-infestation.

On account of the favourable seasonal conditions which are prevailing in Tasmania, consignments continued to increase, shipments during May amounting to 101,664 bags. Demand from week to week was very satisfactory though agents reported that many poor quality whiteskins were included and these were sold at prices lower than those fixed. Supplies were in excess of trade requirements and large carry-overs were in position to supplement successive arrivals. Prices, in view of the larger quantities, showed a general reduction. The following were fixed market quotations during May:- Brownells £5.10.0 to £6.0.0; Bismarcks £5.0.0 to £5.10.0; Snowflakes and Arranchiefs £4.0.0 per ton.

The position as regards the fixation of onion prices was very unsettled during the month. Agents were slow to decide on a price for each shipment as a result of the unstable market in Geelong (Victoria). Rates, because of the smaller supplies, which amounted to only 10,200 bags by sea and 4 trucks by rail, were definitely firmer. In Sussex Street, Brown were quoted at £10.0.0 to £11.10.0 per ton, although odd sales were effected at as high as £12.0.0. The white variety was very scarce and moved out well at the higher range of £8.0.0 to £10.0.0 per ton. Prices at rail were governed to a large extent by those ruling on the wharves.

The dull demand which was noticeable for local pumpkins towards the end of April continued to rule during the period under review. Rail consignments totalled 55 trucks and prices, as a result of the very limited inquiry, were lower at from £3.0.0 to £5.0.0 per ton. Agents reported that the general standard of quality was quite satisfactory.

/A much....

A much larger quantity of Tasmanian swedes was received in Sussex Street due to the favourable Tasmanian growing conditions. Quality generally was good and demand was improved by the advent of cooler weather. Clearances were quite satisfactory. From £4.0.0 to £5.0.0 per ton was quoted for the 3,576 bags available.

Carrots and parsnips from Tasmania were also available in larger quantities, which totalled 3,137 and 770 bags, respectively. The improved inquiry which was noticeable in the case of swedes also ruled for these vegetables which passed from first hands rapidly each week. Values, however, were a little easier at £5.0.0 to £7.0.0 per ton for both carrots and parsnips.

Conditions were very unsettled in the forage section at Alexandria during the month of May. Supplies of oaten chaff totalled only 199 trucks. Demand was unstable and values fluctuated although the general tendency was one of advancement. Prices early in the month ranged from £5.5.0 to £6.5.0 per ton, but later they reached £6.10.0, the highest level attained this year. Wheaten chaff was more heavily supplied, although, as the quality of the offerings showed some improvement, rates were higher at £4.10.0 to £6.7.6 for the 51 trucks available. The standard of quality of the 97 trucks of lucerne chaff in position varied considerably. Prices in sympathy with the increase in the case of white chaff, appreciated by approximately 10/- per ton. Clearances were reported to be quite satisfactory at values ranging from £5.10.0 to £8.10.0.

An improved volume of business was transacted in Sussex Street in respect of the 250 bales of lucerne hay which were received from the Hunter River district. The almost total absence of rain in the near-country districts resulted in a scarcity of natural stock feed and a keener inquiry was in evidence for lucerne hay as a substitute fodder. Realisations were higher at £3.10.0 to £5.0.0 per ton. This improved demand also ruled at Alexandria in the case of the 208 trucks at rail. Maitland hay cleared well at the advanced rate of £4.0.0 to £7.0.0 per ton. The remainder of the offering was forwarded from various New South Wales centres and met with a fairly satisfactory demand at £5.0.0 to £9.0.0 per ton. There were no outstandingly choice lines received.

Approximately 240 bales of Victorian oaten hay were received in Sussex Street. A strong demand ruled throughout the month and, as supplies were well within the needs of buyers rates had a generally upward tendency. Stocks cleared well at prices ranging from £9.0.0 to £9.10.0 per ton. Most of the oaten hay railed to Alexandria was taken into store although a few sales were recorded at £7.10.0 to £8.10.0 per ton for medium quality lots.

/Inquiry....

Inquiry for straw revived considerably and agents were enabled to effect more satisfactory clearances at improved values. Stocks from Tasmania approximated 4,350 bales. They were too small to cope with the demand, as much lighter consignments arrived by rail. Quotations were as follow:- Tasmanian £4.5.0 to £4.15.0, New South Wales £3.10.0 to £5.0.0. Towards the end of the month 500 bales were also received from Victoria. These were of the oaten variety and being of choice quality and well-baled, they cleared rapidly at £5.0.0 per ton.

The easier demand which prevailed for wheat during April, 1937, continued to affect sales during May. The general quality of the 45 trucks which were railed to Alexandria showed some improvement and in the majority of cases consignments were of f.a.q. standard. Buyers, however, evinced little interest in the offerings and stocks, as a rule, were on hand for several days. Prices fluctuated considerably, but a general range of market quotes may be taken as 5/4 to 5/10 per bushel.

An exceptionally good inquiry was in evidence for New South Wales maize. On account of the generally dry weather conditions prevailing in country parts of the State, natural fodder for stock was scarce and extensive hand-feeding was carried on. Agents reported a very strong demand from the country districts. Supplies in Sussex Street, which totalled 10,500 bags, were readily sought after and agents increased prices. Clearances were exceedingly brisk with the arrival of each shipment and most consignments were disposed of on the day of arrival. Prices ranged as follow:- Yellow 5/6 to 6/-, White 5/6 to 5/10. At Alexandria a total of 37 trucks was received, most of which was taken into store. Prices early in the month were firm at 5/6 per bushel for white and 5/6 to 5/9 for yellow. Towards the end of the period, however, values increased to 5/10 for white and 6/- to 6/2 per bushel for yellow. This latter figure (6/2) was the highest realisation for maize ex truck at Alexandria since April, 1930. In that month maize was quoted 7/3 early and towards the end was down to 6/2. In January, 1930, prices were at the surprisingly high level of 7/6 per bushel.

Realisations for choice oats at Alexandria also soared. Rail consignments totalled 27 trucks but only a small proportion was offered to buyers. Keen competition was in evidence for all good quality lots and prices were much higher at 3/2 to 3/5½ per bushel. The latter figure represents the highest recorded price for oats at Alexandria since September, 1930, when sales were effected at 3/9d.

T. McK.

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STATE MARKETING BUREAU — DEPT OF AGRICULTURE N.S.W.

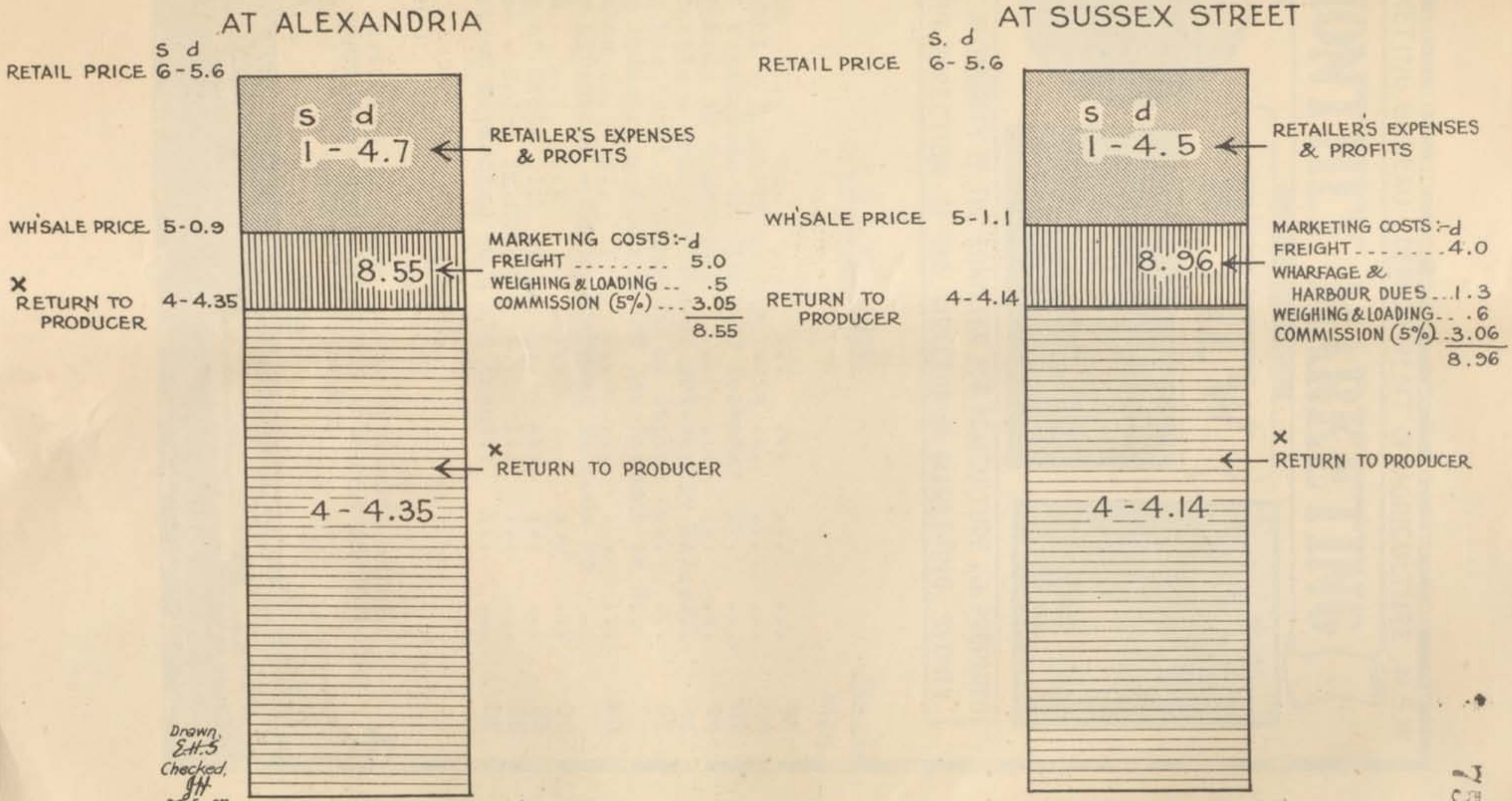
37·603.

M.5.a.

MAIZE

"SPREAD" BETWEEN THE RETURN TO PRODUCER & PRICE PAID BY CONSUMER

YEAR ENDED 30-4-37



× NOTE :- COSTS OF HUSKING, SHELLING, BAGGING, HANDLING, CARTING, BAGS & TWINE AND OTHER COSTS ON THE FARM WILL BE COSTS AGAINST THIS RETURN.