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FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES
AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS, SYDNEY.

New season's apples from
Coastal orchards available.

Generally good demand ruled for apples and although supplies showed a marked decline, the quantities available were well above average for this time of the year. The bulk of the supplies was drawn from Victoria and South Australia. Only relatively small quantities of locally cool-stored fruit were forward, while Tasmanian supplies were confined to Democrats.

Rates were firm and the maximum of 27/- per bushel was obtained for good quality packs of the best trade sizes. A fairly wide range of varieties was on offer, including Jonathan, Rome Beauty, Yates, Granny Smith, Democrat, Rokewood, etc. New season's packs from Coastal orchards comprised mostly "cookers" but some Carringtons were received prior to the close of the month and up to the ceiling rate of 27/- per bushel was obtained.

Pears in light supply.

Light consignments of pears were received from Victoria the old season's fruit being mostly Winter Nelis and Clapp's Favourite from the new season's crop. The quality of the Winter Nelis was variable and only sound lines of the largest sizes realised the maximum of 28/-. Rates for Clapp's Favourite ranged up to 26/-, only an occasional sale being made at higher levels. Prior to the close of the month a small consignment of Williams pears was received from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and disposals were effected at 28/- per bushel.

Stone fruits in demand.

Fairly large consignments of cherries were forward. Demand generally was good and rates firm, especially for choice, large fruit which realised to 20/- per quarter case with some "specials" to 24/-

Choice, large, well-coloured peaches were in request on most days while on some occasions all sizes sold briskly. Generally, buyers concentrated on the large fruit and values were firm but fluctuations occurred in medium to small sizes.

Apricots were only moderately supplied from orchards within New South Wales and good quality large fruit met a ready sale at comparatively high levels, but small sizes had to be sold to the best advantage. Some Victorian apricots were on offer towards the close of the month and up to 50/- per bushel was obtained.

Demand for plums centred around large fruit and up to 20/- per half-case was paid. Rates for medium to small sizes covered a wide range, some lines being sold to factories.

Small quantities of gooseberries were received from inland districts and sales were made at up to 12/- per quarter-case. South Australian packs realised to 16/-.

Reduced consignments of Valencia oranges.

There was a sharp decline in consignments of Valencia oranges from Coastal groves and the ceiling price was obtained for a greater range of counts, only very small sizes and some plain grade fruit selling below that level late in December

Stocks of lemons were also very light towards the close of the month and the maximum of 20/- per bushel was paid for good quality packs of counts 150 and higher.

Bananas fairly plentiful.

Consignments of bananas, which were fairly heavy, included a fairly large percentage of small fruit. Demand generally was only moderate, ripe and under grade fruit selling at low levels. Rates generally ranged from 3d to 6d per lb., while sales of inferior lines were cheaper.

Tropical fruit in request.

Pineapples were in short supply, the bi-weekly consignments being insufficient to meet trade requirements. The ceiling price of 25/- per case was obtained for practically all lines.

Demand for apple mangoes was satisfactory and prices were maintained at high levels.

Papaws were in lighter supply and choice packs sold up to 45/- while a few specials realised more.

Passionfruit supplies improve.

Owing to increased supplies of this fruit towards the end of December there was a sharp fall in values.

Melons sell readily.

Rock melons from local sources and Queensland were available and fairly high prices were obtained.

Only limited quantities of water melons were forward and sizes generally were small; nevertheless, the ceiling price of 11/8 per cwt. was readily paid.

Vegetables affected by dry weather.

Droughty conditions continued during the period throughout the greater number of the growing areas of the State and there was a scarcity of both peas and beans at times and also of a number of root vegetables.

Beans in short supply.

Supplies of beans were extremely light until late in December when consignments were received from the Far South Coast and Victoria. On some days, less than 100 bags were available on agents' floors and only small quantities were obtainable in the growers' section of the market. Demand, as might be expected, exceeded the supply and many buyers were unable to make any purchases on a number of occasions. Practically all lines realised the maximum of 20/- per bushel but lower prices had to be accepted for some "off quality" lots that arrived from the South Coast and Victoria at the close of the month.

Maximum rate obtained for bulk of pea supplies.

The quantity of peas forward were also insufficient to meet the demand during the greater part of the month. The quality of offerings generally was only moderate, much grub infestation being apparent, but no difficulty was experienced in obtaining the ceiling price for all but a small percentage of sweated or very low grade lots. There was an improvement in supplies following the receipt of Victorian consignments but the inquiry was such that disposals of all lines were readily effected.

Tomatoes of good quality sell readily.

Keen demand ruled for tomatoes, particularly choice local packs which sold at the maximum of 20/- per half-case. Consignments from the North Coast were variable in respect of quality, much grub infestation being noticeable, and some lines showed breakdown. Where the quality was good sales and realisations were very satisfactory but other descriptions had to be sold to the best advantage. Supplies of tomatoes from Balranald generally were of low grade, the fruit being small, grub infested and of poor keeping quality. Disposals had to be effected at low prices.

Cabbages sell at high prices.

There was a keen request for choice cabbages early in the month owing to the scarcity of other "greens", and prices reached high levels, up to 40/- per dozen being obtained for small quantities of specially selected large heads. With the

curtailment of purchases by Food Supply, the consignments reaching the market were sufficient to meet trade requirements, and values eased sharply, although realisations for good quality lines were maintained at well above average levels.

Carrots and parsnips in very light supply.

Loose carrots and parsnips were scarce and on a number of days the market was bare of supplies. Small quantities of bunched carrots were available in the growers' section and were eagerly sought. Bunched parsnips were also in request.

The maximum rates for both bunched lines were increased late in December. Carrots with tops not exceeding 10 inches and parsnips with tops not more than 12 inches were advanced to 3½d per lb., but where the tops exceeded the measurements mentioned the ceiling price was 2½d per lb.

Lettuce plentiful.

Lettuce were well supplied but demand generally was only moderate. The shortage of other "greens" and high temperatures appeared to have little effect on values which remained at what might be termed fairly low levels in comparison with other lines.

(R.D. Meaker).

GRAPH SHOWING SHEEP YARDINGS AT HOMEBUSH.

In the graph on Page 26 it will be seen that the yardings of sheep and lambs at the Homebush Saleyards during 1944 reached fairly high levels and exceeded the previous year's total by about 38,000 head. Supplies during the last quarter of 1944 were particularly heavy and during the second week of October the yardings totalled 130,267 head, the largest weekly supply for many years; while the offering of 66,845 head on one sale day in the same week was a record of long standing.

The pastoral industry passed through a most difficult time during 1944 owing to protracted drought conditions and the scarcity of feed and water in many parts of the State were not conducive to the production of fat sheep and lambs. Drought may be regarded as the prime factor influencing the consignment of heavy supplies but the fact must not be overlooked that graziers were urged by the Government to market as many sheep and lambs as possible to meet Service and civilian requirements and to overcome as far as possible the drain on beef supplies, which also were in relatively short supply. Furthermore, the needs of the plants engaged in dehydrating mutton had to be met as well as export commitments.