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Boar pigs are selling remarkably well and present values are out of all proportion to pre-war levels. Officially, of course, all pigs dressing in excess of 200 lb. are rated the same value per lb. irrespective of size, age, sex or quality. The highest price paid per head was £15.1.0 in respect of a large boar which dressed 715 lb.

Store pigs sell at high prices.

Porkers were in limited supply at opening but on the remaining sale days they made the best showing for some time. All grades of weight were represented and the majority could be classed as stores. Despite the increased numbers available, demand continued to be exceptionally keen. A large proportion of the lightweights were valued at 1/- per lb. or more and some quotations reached as high as 1/6 per lb. Early in the period even heavy porkers were quoted to 1/- per lb.

(S.D. Robertson and
J.R. Williams).

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES
AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS, SYDNEY.

Apples in request.

Receivals of apples from orchards within New South Wales were light. Coloured dessert varieties were sought after and the ceiling price was obtained for Jonathan, Delicious, McIntosh Red and Fanny of the best trade sizes. Early in the month Gravenstein were available and this variety also sold well. Large Granny Smiths realised the maximum but rates for medium to small fruit were variable.

Consignments comprising a number of different varieties were received from Victoria and South Australia, including a good percentage of Jonathans which met a ready sale. Late in the month the first of the new season's Tasmanian apples, mainly Worcester Pearmain and Alfriston, arrived on the market.

Firmer market for choice pears.

Large quantities of Williams pears came to hand from Victoria. Demand generally was good for choice, green packs and values showed an upward trend as the month progressed. Ripe fruit was plentiful at times and fairly low prices had to be accepted to enable clearances to be made. Supplies from within New South Wales were light; choice packs met a good inquiry at firm rates. Small consignments of Beurre Bosc were also received and prompt clearances were effected.

Peaches and nectarines sell well.

Harvesting of the coastal peach crop was completed early in February but inland and interstate supplies were available. There was a brisk demand for the J.H. Hale variety and the ceiling price was realised for good quality fruit. Consignments of canning varieties from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area were somewhat slow of sale owing to much of the fruit being affected by dust, while the keeping quality was unsatisfactory in many instances. Low prices had to be accepted in consequence. Nectarines of choice quality from inland orchards were in steady request and high prices were realised. There was a good demand for choice large plums early in the month and rates were maintained at fairly high levels but the market was weak towards the close and values declined appreciably.

Choice grapes meet a satisfactory inquiry.

The coastal crop of Black Muscatel grapes was light and only small quantities were available but supplies from Central Tableland vineyards increased. Choice packs of coastal fruit sold well and rates were firm. Values of inland supplies showed an advance towards the close of February.

Supplies from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area included Waltham Cross, Gordos, Miscats and, late in the month, Cornichons. Prices for Gordos were weak early but there was an improvement later. There was a steady inquiry for Waltham Cross at prices ranging to 14/- per half-case and occasionally higher, while Cornichons realised to 12/-.

Lemons in short supply.

Stocks of lemons were limited and at times supplies were scarce. Maximum prices ruled for standard packs.

Good oranges sell well.

Valencia oranges continued to come forward from both Coastal and Irrigation Area groves. There was a good demand for the best counts at ceiling rates but very small fruit and some plain grade lines were somewhat slow of sale.

Pineapple supplies lighter.

Consignments of pineapples were heavy for the first three weeks of the month and values had to be reduced to well below the fixed maximum to enable clearances to be effected. During the closing week there was a considerable decline in supplies and the market recovered, choice packs selling to the ceiling rate of 25/- per case.

Passionfruit scarce.

Passionfruit supplies fell away and for the relatively few lots available late in February high prices were obtained.

Rates for bananas reduced.

There was a steady demand for the large sizes of good quality bananas at the new ceiling level of 5³/₄d per lb., but under-grade and ripe lines were sold at lower levels.

Cantaloupes plentiful.

Very heavy consignments of cantaloupes reached the market from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area about mid-February, 5,000 crates arriving on Monday, 12th February; this quantity was stated to be a record. With the large supplies available prices slumped but with reduced quantities later in the month rates showed much improvement.

Demand for water-melons slackens.

There was a good demand for water-melons until about the third week of the month. Subsequently, particularly heavy supplies arrived for which there was a comparatively limited demand and as a result values slumped.

Bean market irregular.

Supplies of beans showed considerable variation, ranging from light to glut proportions. The increase in consignments was attributed to the improved weather conditions prevailing since mid-January. Fairly large quantities were transported by road from the Far South Coast, while the nearer coastal districts and metropolitan gardens contributed to the supply.

Demand was limited so far as the retail trade was concerned, little attention being paid to other than choice descriptions. Carry-over stocks were heavy at times and the Department of Food Supply cleared floors of surplus lots on 24th February. The range of prices ruling was wide; on some occasions it was possible to sell at as much as 16/- per bushel, but on a number of days it was difficult to obtain 5/- per bushel for the choicest offerings.

Peas plentiful.

Consignments of peas were heavy. Only on a few occasions did daily receipts fall below 2,000 bags, while on the 23rd February no less than 4,500 bags were on offer.

Despite the heavy supplies, generally satisfactory prices were obtained for choicest quality lots, which did not fall below

12/- per bushel while up to 20/- and higher was obtained. The assistance of canners, however, had to be sought to clear surpluses of lower grade lines and disposals generally were effected at 6/- per bushel.

Market for tomatoes closes weaker.

The market for tomatoes was steady until towards the end of February. Consignments from Southern Queensland were fairly heavy during the first week of the month when 15,000 half-cases arrived but there was a sharp decline in supplies subsequently. Metropolitan growers' packs showed a falling-off but increased quantities came to hand from inland growing areas of New South Wales and from Victoria.

The ceiling rate of 14/- per half-case was obtained for choice lines during the greater part of the month but prior to the close values were weaker, especially for many inland and Victorian lots.

New season's cauliflowers on offer.

Small consignments of cauliflowers forward from the Bathurst district included some good quality heads which realised up to 40/- per dozen.

Choice cabbages sell satisfactorily.

Generally there was a good inquiry for choice cabbages but sales of lower grade offerings were very slow at times. Up to 18/- per dozen was paid for choice large heads but towards the end of February prices were easier at around 12/- owing to the exceptionally heavy stocks of beans and peas.

Bunched root vegetables in request.

Keen demand ruled for bunched beetroot, carrots and parsnips, and prices generally were maintained at high levels although the receipt of increased quantities of loose carrots tended to ease rates for this vegetable.

(R.D. Meaker).