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Review of



Marketing and Agricultural Economics

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DIVISION OF MARKETING
AND
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

REVIEW OF MARKETING AND AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS.

Issued by authority of the Minister for Agriculture
(HON. E.H. GRAHAM, M.L.A.)
and prepared under the direction of the Chief of the
Division of Marketing and Agricultural Economics,
Department of Agriculture, New South Wales, Australia.

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APPLE PRICES.

Price fixation for apples has carried with it an anomaly ever since the Prices Commissioner issued the Order in February, 1943, and the repeated agitations by the N.S.W. Fruit Shopkeepers' Association over the past 15 months for a change in the system were not without foundation. As it stands, the Prices Regulation provides for the wholesaling of fruit on a case basis; and were every case to contain 40 lbs. as presupposed in the Order, there would be no complaint from retailers on the score that if sales by retail must be by weight then the same should apply to wholesale transactions. But the results of numerous test weighings of apples of different varieties and in different sizes, conducted by this Division last year, clearly established that considerable variations occur in the nett contents of cases. It is not denied that many packs often contain several lbs. in excess of 40, but the fact that in so many instances - particularly with interstate fruit - the poundage is well below 40, has been a sharp reminder to the retailer of the inequality of the existing Regulation, especially in the case of the small trader and when ruling prices are at the coiling level.

The whole problem was discussed last month at a conference convened by the Minister for Agriculture. In seeking a solution, the difficulties were realised of determining nett content for each case at the point of sale, or of ensuring guaranteed weight of fruit being stamped on cases by producers. A sub-committee representative of this Department, the Apple and Pear Board, Weights and Measures Department, retailers and wholesalers subsequently was deputed to assess by test weighings the average nett content per case in different consignments - having regard to variety, size of fruit and type of case. The Prices Commission finally agreed that where the nett content of Tasmanian apples was less than 40 lb., the coiling price could be graduated according to weight, as determined by test weighings. Hence, on a maximum price of 27/- per case, only 23/7½ would be paid for a case containing 35 lb. Tasmanian apples have been mostly in dispute and the Prices Branch will give consideration to the inclusion of other apples if found to be necessary.

H. J. Hynes.
Chief of Division.