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GENERAL NOTES AND NEWS.

At a further conference of representatives of vegetable growers' associations held on 2nd October it was agreed that legislation should be introduced to provide for the registration of vegetable growers in N.S.W.

The Chief of the Division was represented at a recent meeting of a Committee called together by the Sydney Technical College Authorities to consider the question of instituting a course of instruction covering the essentials involved in the successful marketing and distribution of fruits and vegetables. The Committee included representatives of growers', wholesalers' and retailers' organisations.

The first meeting of the newly-constituted Fruit and Vegetable Marketing Advisory Committee was held on 26th September, there being a representative attendance of producers and the trade. This Committee has been formed with the object of finding solutions to marketing problems as they arise, and of considering plans calculated to improve marketing conditions generally.

Officers of the Division are giving attention to the present position as it relates to markets and the marketing of dairy products in New South Wales and a statement is in course of preparation in which ideas and suggestions regarding future developments are set out. Attention will be given in similar fashion to other agricultural commodities in due course.

The Chief of the Division recently attended a meeting of the Public Service Board Committee on Co-ordination of Country Services. Matters affecting the establishment of Government centres at Newcastle, Lismore and Grafton received consideration.

Restrictions within the State on the transport and uses of cereal hay, straw and chaff, on lucerne hay and chaff, and on oaten grain have now been lifted.

The Commonwealth Government has decided that vegetable contracts in all States will for 1946 be confined to 50% of the original targets planned for the year. This follows from the sudden falling off of service demands for the Pacific area. It is not at this stage intended to place any vegetable contracts for delivery after June 30, 1946.

Nearly £1 m. has been paid out as grants to cereal growers in those parts of the State seriously affected by drought in 1944/45. Of a total of 10,657 applications for relief received, over 10,500 were paid in full.

A total of 147,000 tons of superphosphate will be distributed in New South Wales in 1945/46, as compared with 110,000 tons in 1944/45. This will permit of an increase of 40% in supplies to growers of non-priority crops who obtained superphosphate as a quota or from the Contingencies Pool last year.

Reverse lend-lease aid by Australia to the United States had reached £258 m. by the end of June, 1945. Food amounted to £69 m. of this total, and included: Meat, 179,000 tons; fruit and vegetables, 212,000 tons; canned goods, 87,000 tons; fresh milk, 7½ m. gallons; processed milk, 38,000 tons; cereals (including flour), 231,000 tons; eggs, 55 m. dozen; butter (and substitutes), 35,000 tons; potatoes, 74,000 tons.

Plantings of main and late potatoes in this State for 1945/46 are to be reduced by 25%. This action has been taken to scale production down to the new levels demanded by the heavy reduction in the Services' requirements of potatoes.

The yield of wheat grain in New South Wales this season has been officially forecast at 51 million bushels but it is possible this figure may not be realised should the prevailing dry weather continue, having in mind particularly that crops in the southern portion of the wheat belt are a good deal later than usual.

As was recently announced, insurance companies have agreed to a reduction in the premium rates for hail insurance of cereal crops. Investigations are being pursued in order to ascertain whether any workable scheme can be devised for insuring crops against losses from causes other than hail, such as drought, disease and flood.
