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FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

OCTOBER, 1948.

FRUIT.

Choice Quality Apples Scarce.

As the season advanced the weakness this year in keeping quality of most lines of apples, which had been placed in cool store, became more evident. Many New South Wales packs of fruit branded Fancy showed excessive breakdown, and Victorian, Tasmanian and South Australian consignments also opened in bad condition. As a result, inquiry was restricted to fruit of sound condition and apparently good keeping quality. A shipment of Granny Smiths from Western Australia included some lines of choice fruit.

Values for the choice fruit offered showed little variation in prices from those recorded for September. Representative quotations were as follows:—*New South Wales.*—Delicious, 10s. to 24s., choice large to 30s., odd higher; Rome Beauty, 10s. to 24s.; Granny Smith, 12s. to 22s., few to 24s.; Dougherty, 14s. to 24s.; Democrat, 14s. to 18s. *Tasmania.*—Rome Beauty, 12s. to 16s.; Granny Smith, 14s. to 22s.; Jonathan, 12s. to 14s.; Crofton, 14s. to 18s.; French Crab, 10s. to 12s.; Democrat, 12s. to 14s.; Sturmer and Stone Pippin, 10s. to 14s. *Victoria.*—Jonathan, 12s. to 18s., few 20s.; Delicious, 14s. to 20s., few 24s. *South Australia.*—Jonathan, 16s. to 20s.; inferior lines cheaper.

New South Wales Pears in Short Supply.

Limited offerings of Packham's Triumph pears from New South Wales growers were on offer. Choice lines were scarce and commanded high prices but, as with apples, most lines showed excessive breakdown. Victorian brands showed a similar condition.

Prices showed little variation from those recorded for September. Quotations were last noted for New South Wales pears on 22nd October. Representative quotations were as follows:—*New South Wales.*—Packham's Triumphs, 12s. to 20s., few 22s.; Winter Cole, 14s. to 16s., special to 20s., few to 24s. *Victoria.*—Packham's Triumph, 14s. to 18s., special to 22s.; Winter Cole, 14s. to 18s., special to 24s.; Josephine, 16s. to 18s., special to 22s., few to 24s. per bushel case. Wasty and inferior lines were cheaper.

Early Apricots Available.

Light supplies of early apricots were on the market late in the month from near-Metropolitan districts. The present dry season was responsible for the very small fruit offering. Realisations ranged from 8/- to 14/- per ¼ bushel box. Half cases sold from 16/- to 24/-.

Cherries on Offer.

A very small number of cherries from the Lakesland district reached the market about the middle of the month. For two or three days 50/- per ¼ case was obtained but prices declined to 45/-, and after 22nd October rates quoted were from 20/- to 25/- per case.

Bananas Cheaper Late in October.

Until the fourth week realisations for bananas varied but little, ranging from 18/- to 44/- per banana case; commencing on the 22nd October, heavy supplies, particularly of ripe fruit, resulted in much lower prices, sales being made at from 10/- to 36/-, with a few special green 9-inch and 8-inch higher. Quotations at closing were as follow:—Cavendish 9-inch and 8-inch, 30s. to 36s., few special to 42s.; sevens, 18s. to 26s., special to 30s.; sixes, 10s. to 16s., few special to 20s. Rates for Lady Finger during the first three weeks were mainly 20s. to 30s., with special to 35s., and a few 44s. Late quotations, 10s. to 20s., few special to 30s. Prices for *Queensland* Cavendish and Lady Finger followed the trends reported above and quotations were:—Early sale Cavendish, 18s. to 42s., few higher; Lady Finger, 14s. to 30s.; closing rates Cavendish, 10s. to 25s., special to 28s.; Lady Finger, 15s. to 30s. per banana case. Inferior lines were cheaper.

Consignments from Queensland during October totalled 12,536 cases, being 382 more than September arrivals.

Increasing Supplies of Valencia Oranges.

Offerings of Coastal Valencia oranges increased as the month advanced. Quotations ranged from 6s. to 12s. per bushel case during the first two weeks with prices advancing late in the month to 15s. for choice large fruit. Small sizes, however, weakened and brought from 4s. to 5s. Coastal Washington Navel stocks were ample, early quotations varying from 7s. to 14s. according to size. Closing rates were mainly 10s. to 20s. per case, with a few sales at 22s. for extra choice large fruit. Wasty and inferior lots were cheaper. Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area consignments on offer during the first two weeks of the month brought from 8s. to 14s. per bushel case.

Heavy Supplies of Coastal Lemons.

A weak inquiry for lemons was in evidence through the month. Supplies were heavy and stocks of large-sized fruit moved out very slowly. Most transactions took place at from 4s. to 6s. per bushel case. At closing up to 10s. was occasionally paid for extra choice packs of 150 count. Buying for processing was at 2s. 6d. and 3s. a case, but not in sufficient volume to clear the market.

Emperor Mandarins Sold Slowly.

Except for choice large fruit, Emperor mandarins were well supplied and sold slowly. Ellendales, however, were lightly supplied and met a firm request. Ruling rates were:—Emperor, 3s. to 10s., choice large, 12s. to 16s., a few special to 18s.; Ellendale, 6s. to 18s., a few to 24s.

Restricted Request for Grapefruit.

Choice large grapefruit met a moderate demand, but other grades were largely neglected by buyers. Quotations were from 3s. to 8s., a few to 10s. per bushel.

Ample Supplies of Passionfruit.

While choice, well filled fruit was comparatively scarce, medium and plain lines were ample for trade requirements. Realisations showed little variation, being mainly from 14s. to 28s., with choice lines to 34s. per half bushel case. A few special offerings were higher and some inferior cheaper.

Limited Demand for Strawberries.

The limited demand for local strawberries was met at prices ranging from 18s. to 30s. per dozen punnets. Odd lots of extra choice berries brought 36s.

Steady Request for Mulberries.

Mulberries moved out steadily at from 4s. to 8s. per dozen punnets.

Light Offerings of Loquats.

There was a moderate demand for the light offering of loquats and sales were made at 8s. to 14s. per half bushel case.

Queensland Tropical Fruit Sold Steadily.

Tropical fruits cleared satisfactorily throughout the period under review. Particulars as to arrivals during October, with some September totals given in brackets, are followed by range of prices.

Pineapples, 28,515 tropical cases (25,967), 14s. to 28s., few to 30s., inferior lower; Papaws, 11,346 tropical cases (7,918), 10s. to 16s., few to 20s.; Avocados, 658 per half case (612), Fuerte and similar, 14s. to 18s., other varieties, 6s. to 10s.; Rockmelons, 630 half bushel cases, 10s. to 12s.; Passionfruit, 24 half bushel cases, 20s. to 30s.; Mangoes, 510 half cases (6), common, 8s. to 12s.

VEGETABLES.

Light Supplies of Peas.

During the month 35,553 bags of peas were on offer in the agents' sections and, in addition, a considerable quantity in the growers' markets. This total compares unfavourably with the 40,788 bags received in September. It is also interesting to note that during October, 1947, 42,000 bags were available, apart from those sold in the growers' markets. These figures show the heavy fall in production due to drought conditions. The quality of peas on offer also showed the effects of the unfavourable weather, although choice lots were noted each day and commanded high prices.

Total consignments were much heavier during the first week of the month, and rates ranged from 8s. to 14s. per bushel, with a few 15s. With slight variations prices rose steadily, and on the last trading day of October a sharp rise occurred, realisations being from 12s. to 26s. per bushel, with a few sales to 32s.

More Beans Available.

Beans on offer totalled 29,908 packages, an increase of 3,408. New South Wales offerings amounted to 22,685 bags and Queensland consignments 7,223 packages. Unlike the pea position, current supplies were almost equal to the total of beans for October, 1947. Dry weather, aphis infestation and disease, resulted in many consignments being of poor quality and prices correspondingly low. During the first half of the month sales ranged from 1s. to 20s. per bushel, but for the rest of October, except the 29th, quotations for New South Wales beans varied from 4s. to 20s., with a few special higher. Queensland offerings sold from 10s. to 16s. On 29th extra choice New South Wales lots realised to 26s., with a few sales higher.

Local beans were on sale in the growers' markets on and after 8th October, and mainly realised 18s. to 22s. a bushel, except on 29th, when sales were effected at 26s. and higher.

Offerings of Broad Beans Increase.

Early in the month increased quantities of broad beans were available and supplies continued throughout the month. Realisations were mainly from 3s. to 5s., with a few sales at 6s. per bushel. On the last trading day sales were 4s. to 8s., with a few 9s.

Steady Demand for Cabbages.

Cabbages were well supplied and, at times, clearances were not complete, but choice large heads were scarce and on all days brought from 12s. to 14s. per dozen. Small and medium heads realised from 4s. to 10s. Very small and inferior were cheaper. Buying for processing, on many days, helped to maintain prices and clear stocks.

Cauliflowers Lightly Supplied.

Light supplies of cauliflowers were available throughout the period under review and sold freely. Values were influenced considerably by the quantity of peas and beans available. Rates showed a large range at from 8s. to 20s. per dozen, with higher realisations on some days. Quotations on 29th October were from 6s. to 24s., with special to 30s. a dozen.

New South Wales Marrows Arrived.

On and after 25th October, New South Wales vegetable marrows were offered in addition to supplies from Queensland. Rates for New South Wales lines were 16s. to 22s. per tropical case, these figures being 2s. to 4s. higher than realisations for consignments from Queensland.

Lettuce Sold at Varying Rates.

Early in the month lettuce realised 2s. to 5s., but rates rose to 4s. to 10s., and on some days up to 14s. per case was obtained.

Increased Supplies of Glasshouse Tomatoes.

Glasshouse tomatoes were on offer in increasing quantities and sold at from 20s. to 30s. per half case, with small and inferior lower. North Coast consignments totalled 80,187 half cases, against 1,950 received during September. Rates ranged from 10s. to 30s. according to size and condition. Quality showed considerable variation and, at times, lots were withheld from sale owing to immaturity and disease. Supplies from Queensland totalled 62,224 half cases, a decrease of 5,822 for the month. Quotations were within the range of 10s. to 20s., while repacked offerings brought from 28s. to 30s. per half bushel case.

Root Vegetables and Pumpkins Dear.

As the result of very light supplies of potatoes throughout the month, swede turnips, carrots, parsnips and sweet potatoes commanded high prices—see quotations. Pumpkins also sold at unusually high rates as listed.

South Australian Celery Consignments Finish.

A total of 4,561 crates of celery arrived from South Australia during the month, the final consignment for the season being received on 20th October. The quality of late season supplies was not choice, most packs showing seed-stalk development. Prices ranged from 14s. to 40s., with closing rates 28s. to 45s. per crate.

Other Main Vegetable Lines.

Representative ranges of prices for other main lines of vegetables were as follow:—Carrots 40s. to 80s., closing rates 70s. to 100s.; parsnips early in the month, 30s. to 64s., closing rates 30s. to 40s.; potatoes, No. 1 grade, 10s., few new Queensland 23s. 7½d. (potato prices being fixed maximum); sweet potatoes 26s. to 56s., closing rates 40s. to 60s.; pumpkins 50s. to 60s., closing rates 70s. to 82s. per cwt.; local celery 9s. to 18s. per dozen bunches.

A. M. BURNS.