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GENERAL NOTES AND NEWS.

Based on reports received in February in respect of pome fruit production in New South Wales, the Division has forecast a yield of 1,000,000 loose bushels of apples and 350,000 loose bushels of pears. This is equivalent to 800,000 and 280,000 packed bushels of apples and pears respectively. Due to the adverse conditions experienced earlier in the season, much of the fruit will be of small size and blemished. Under the circumstances the pack-out is likely to be considerably reduced notwithstanding the anticipated yields.

The maize outlook in this State has shown a considerable improvement as the result of the splendid February rains, particularly in respect of late sown crops. Early crops either failed or were used as stock feed owing to the dry and hot conditions during January.

The Division is preparing an exhibit for the 1947 Royal Agricultural Society's Show depicting its activities in respect of the various types of service rendered the producer and consumer.

In response to the invitation of the recently-constituted Commonwealth Wheat Costs of Production Committee, the Division has prepared comment on methods usually adopted in such inquiries, and the limitations of certain lines of procedure.

An officer of the Economics Branch visited the Batlow district to follow up aspects of the investigation into production costs of pome fruits in that district.

A number of farmers in the New England district are co-operating with the Division by keeping records of operations carried out and costs incurred in connection with their soy-bean crops this season.

Very favourable reference was recently made in an editorial of the Australian Broadcasting Commission Weekly to the broadcasting data furnished by the Division for use in the "Country Hour."

A representative of the Division was present at a conference called to consider the activities of barrowmen in relation to avenues for disposal of perishable fruit and vegetables and at which the following resolutions were carried:—(1) that the Minister for Agriculture should confer with the Minister for

Local Government with regard to the renewal of the campaign to interest local authorities in the allotment of barrow sites in their areas; (2) that the Markets Advisory Committee examine sites in the City for barrows, in side streets or cul-de-sacs, and to report to the Council and the Police; (3) that the views of the City Council and Police Department be secured in respect of (2).

Investigations into the cost of operating tractors and implements at several Government Machinery Pools have been in progress for the past three years. These inquiries recently reached the stage where it was possible to issue tentative cost figures covering a wide range of tractors and a number of different implements. The Farm Mechanisation Section of the Department has now adopted these figures as a basis for any recommendations which they may have to make in regard to charges to be made by Machinery Pools.

The Farm Record Books which have been published by the Division for several years have been completely revised with the view of simplifying their appearance to the farmer and generally making it easier for the farmer to both keep and analyse his records.

A further conference was held at Melbourne on 26th and 27th February to discuss details regarding the implementation of the proposed Commonwealth egg marketing organisation, Australian Egg Equalisation Committee Limited. Earlier in the month the Australian Agricultural Council, on the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, had adopted the proposals embodied in the new scheme. This conference at Melbourne prepared the way for an early registration of the proposed company and worked out the procedure to be followed in order that there be a smooth change-over from the present Commonwealth control of the egg industry to the new scheme on 30th June, 1947.