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## **FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.**

**March, 1947.**

### **FRUIT.**

#### **Dessert Apples Again in Light Supply.**

Delicious and Jonathan dessert apples were available only in moderate quantities during the month. Values for choice large coloured fruit remained firm throughout, best Delicious being quoted as high as 28s. and at times 30s. per bushel case and Jonathan at 24s. to 26s. and occasionally 28s. at closing. Smaller sizes were available from as low as 10s. Supplies from New South Wales districts were supplemented by moderate consignments from Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia and one shipment from Tasmania. Quotations for some of the other dessert varieties available were:—King David, 12s. to 18s., few 22s.; Pomme de Nieve, 12s. to 20s., few 22s.; Duke of Clarence, 14s. to 18s. Cooking apples also were insufficient for trade requirements and realised the following prices:—Granny Smith, 10s. to 20s.; Cleopatra, 8s. to 15s.; London Pippin, 7s. to 12s.

#### **Pears Less Plentiful and Prices Firmer.**

Most of the pears on offer during the early part of the month were of the "Williams" variety and came from New South Wales and Victoria. Towards the close, however, these were less plentiful and Packham's Triumph commenced to arrive in increasing quantities daily. Quotations for Williams were firmer at 8s. to 16s. and occasionally higher per bushel case, whilst large Packham's Triumph realised as much as 18s. Other New South Wales varieties represented were Beurre Bosc 8s. to 14s., Howells 10s. to 12s., Sheldon and Beurre de Cornice 8s. to 10s., Keifer (medium size) 6s. to 10s. A good demand ruled for all lines on most selling days.

#### **Consignments of Peaches Decline.**

Only small consignments of peaches from Central Tableland districts came to hand on most selling days. These sold satisfactorily, choice peaches being relatively scarce. Rates, generally, ranged from 8s. to 14s. per half-bushel case, with special large-sized packs of the "J. H. Hale" variety 16s. to 20s. Moderate quantities were received from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, but many lines showed rapid deterioration. Quotations covered the wide range of from 4s. to 8s., choice 10s. to 12s., and occasionally higher, per half-bushel case. Victorian centres also forwarded light consignments. These showed a fairly high percentage of "break-down," due to deterioration during transit, and rates ranged according to quality from 10s. to 20s. per bushel case for yellow clingstones and from 18s. to 28s. for white flesh varieties. Some inferior lots were lower.

**Receivals of Plums and Nectarines Terminate.**

Plums and nectarines were available in limited quantities during the first half of the period, but at closing only a few lines of plums from cool store were on offer. Plums realised from 5s. to 14s. according to size and quality, with special packs 16s. to 18s. and occasionally higher per half case. Nectarines realised from 8s. to 15s., with very small and inferior lower.

**Grapes Fairly Plentiful and Sell Well.**

Daily offerings of grapes during March were fairly large and a wide range of varieties was represented. Inquiry was keen and at most times good-quality lines cleared well. Supplies from coastal sources declined gradually in quality and quantity, but receivals from inland districts progressively replaced them. Quotations for medium to choice grades were as follow:—*New South Wales*: Black Muscat 10s. to 18s., special to 22s., White Muscat 8s. to 16s., extra choice to 20s., Other Black, Cornichon 6s. to 10s., few 12s. to 15s., Other White, Waltham Cross 8s. to 14s., Dorrillo 6s. to 12s.; *Queensland*: Gros Coleman (Black) 6s. to 10s., special 12s. to 14s., Waltham Cross (White) 6s. to 14s. per half-bushel case.

**Small Supplies of Bananas.**

The quantity of bananas received during March was again insufficient for retail requirements and most large good-quality lines cleared well at the fixed maximum wholesale rate of 6¼d. per lb. Stocks were mainly from New South Wales sources, though light consignments from Queensland came to hand regularly. A percentage of very small and forward ripe fruit was included and agents were obliged to dispose of this at lower-price levels.

**Choice Main Crop Valencia Oranges Scarce.**

A gradual falling off both in quality and quantity was noticed in supplies of main crop Valencia oranges from coastal areas and from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Choice lines with keeping qualities were scarce and at most times during the month popular counts realised 28s. to 30s. and occasionally higher per bushel case. Small sizes and packs showing break-down were available, however, at much lower values. Inquiry for second crop lines from coastal areas was satisfactory for large sizes, particularly those showing colour, and best lines were quoted at 20s. to 26s. At closing, however, the market was over supplied, both with very small and green second crop fruit, and agents experienced difficulty in maintaining clearances even at as low as 2s. per case. A few new season Queensland Navel oranges were received and realised from 24s. to 32s. per bushel case.

**Prices for Lemons again Decline.**

New South Wales lemons, mainly from coastal districts, were well supplied on most selling days and values which opened at 16s. per bushel case for best packs declined steadily throughout the period, quotations at closing ranging from 4s. to 8s., with choice 10s. to 12s. A high percentage of break-down was apparent in many consignments. Moderate quantities of Queensland

wrapped lemons showing good colour were received and these met a fairly strong demand, bringing as high as 30s. per bushel case early in the month and from 10s. to 18s. towards the close.

#### **Passionfruit Dearer.**

Although stocks of passionfruit throughout the greater part of the month were fairly heavy, choice lines represented only a small percentage of offerings and were quoted at 16s. to 20s. per half bushel case. In the last week, however, these rates increased to range from 20s. to 26s. when a slight falling off in supplies was evident.

#### **Persimmons Available.**

Moderate supplies of persimmons were offered in the last three weeks of March. Quality covered a wide range, demand being mainly for good ripe fruit of the "flat" variety. Best packs realised 6s. to 10s. per half bushel case with very green and inferior from as low as 2s.

#### **Moderate Stocks of Quinces.**

Quinces available were mainly from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Request for large sizes was good at 10s. to 12s. and occasionally 14s. per bushel case, but smaller fruit met a dull demand at 6s. to 9s.

#### **Papaws Dear.**

Only small consignments of papaws from Queensland came to hand each week and prices were high at 20s. to 30s., special 35s. to 40s., per tropical case.

#### **Lighter Offerings of Pineapples.**

Receivals of pineapples from Queensland during March were lighter, amounting to 36,100 tropical cases compared with 40,350 during the month of February. "Water-blister" was again prevalent and realisations covered a wide range. At most times, choice packs realised from 20s. to the fixed maximum of 26s. 3d. per tropical case, but many very small and many inferior lines were disposed of at much lower price levels.

#### **Lighter Stocks of Cantaloupes Result in Higher Prices.**

There was a gradual decline in the quantities of cantaloupes received daily from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and prices throughout the period had a firmer tendency, ranging mainly from 12s. to 26s. per crate according to size and quality. A few special lots brought 28s. to 30s. Honey Dews from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area commenced to arrive about the middle of the month but were practically neglected by buyers and quotations, which opened at 16s. per crate, were progressively reduced and at closing ranged from 8s. to 10s.

#### **Water Melon Supplies Cease.**

The dull demand for water melons recorded in last issue continued early in the current month and most realisations varied between 4s. and 12s. per dozen according to size. In the second

and third weeks of March, however, supplies decreased daily and values advanced, as high as 24s. per dozen being obtained for choice large lines. At closing the quantities coming forward were almost negligible.

#### **Other Fruit.**

Other fruit available included:—Custard apples (Queensland), early sales 16s. to 25s., choice, 30s.; at closing, 6s. to 16s., few 18s.; Avocados (Queensland), 20s. to 32s. per half case; Monstera Deliciosa (Queensland), 4s. to 8s. per box; Grapefruit—New South Wales, 8s. to 15s., few 18s.; Queensland, 18s. to 26s. per bushel case.

### **VEGETABLES.**

#### **Peas Insufficient for Retail Requirements.**

Supplies of peas on most selling days were insufficient for the requirements of the retail trade and, for the first three weeks of the month, buyers were obliged to pay from 24s. to 28s. and occasionally 30s. per bushel for choice lines. At closing a slight increase in supplies resulted in values depreciating and quotations ranged mainly from 10s. to 18s. and occasionally to 20s. per bushel.

#### **Beans Generally Dearer.**

Considerable variation in the quantities of beans available from day to day was noticeable and prices accordingly showed rapid fluctuation. On days when supplies were insufficient to meet the demand best lines realised from 16s. to 20s. per bushel but on other occasions agents found it difficult to realise more than 10s. Good quality beans represented a fairly high percentage offerings, but many lines of medium and inferior standard were forwarded, these being difficult to clear at times even at 4s. per bushel and lower. Moderate consignments were received from Victoria and Queensland to supplement local stocks but many of these lines showed signs of deterioration on arrival. Quotations for Victorian ranged from 6s. to 16s. and for Queensland from 6s. to 14s. per bushel.

#### **Tomato Prices High Apart from Short Period of Glut.**

In the first half of the month supplies of coloured tomatoes were fairly light and best local packs realised 20s. to 26s. and on occasions to 32s. per half case. These high prices, however, brought forward gradually increasing quantities from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and other inland districts of New South Wales in addition to consignments from Victoria and Queensland, and, by Monday, 17th March, a heavy accumulation of soft, ripe tomatoes was on hand. This resulted in a sharp depreciation in prices and, values on that day, which opened at 14s., seldom exceeded 8s. per half case later in the morning. This period of over-supply lasted for approximately five days before processors and factory buyers were able to relieve the position by removing forward ripe fruit from the market at very low prices.

Towards the end of the month stocks were lighter and values had recovered and had again reached 20s. per half case for best local packs.

**Cabbages Again Lightly Supplied.**

Consignments of cabbages on most selling days were fairly light and choice large heads in particular were in demand. Rates did not show any marked fluctuation and ranged mainly from 8s. to 16s. per dozen with very small sizes from 2s.

**Choice Cauliflowers Relatively Scarce.**

Although gradually increasing quantities of cauliflowers were available during March, choice large heads continued to represent only a relatively small proportion of offerings. Prices for these remained high and varied from 20s. to 36s. per dozen and occasionally higher in accordance with the available supplies on each selling day. Small, soft and discoloured heads met a restricted demand at all times and prices varied widely, ranging from as low as 2s. per dozen. Realisations for medium sized lines of good quality were fairly stable at 10s. to 18s.

**Lettuce Cheaper at Closing.**

For the first three weeks of the month supplies of lettuce were not sufficient for retail requirements and as high as 10s. to 14s. per case was obtained for best packs. In the last week of March, however, cooler weather resulted in a decline in demand and prices eased, ranging mainly from 4s. to 8s. per case with special lines to 10s.

**Cucumbers Over-supplied.**

Both green and apple cucumbers were heavily supplied throughout the greater part of the period and most realisations were from 1s. to 4s. per half case. Special packs, however, brought slightly higher values on some days.

**Other Main Vegetable Lines.**

Carrots 8s. to 20s., few sales 24s. to 28s. Parsnips 16s. to 32s., few sales 36s. to 40s. Potatoes (fixed maximum price) 7s. 10½d. Onions: Victorian (white) 23s. 6d., (Brown) 22s. 6d. to 23s. 6d. (23s. 6d. is fixed maximum price). Swedes: New South Wales and Tasmanian 16s. to 28s., few 32s., inferior lower, per cwt.

T. McKEON.

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