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Backfatters Cheaper.

Supplies of backfatters were moderate, but fair to good trade lightweights formed the bulk of supplies, prime heavy descriptions being relatively scarce. Values showed a sharp decline at opening, when they ranged to 7d. per lb. The market subsequently improved slightly, but rates were again easier at closing. On a per head basis prices ranged to £17 9s. 6d.

Prime Porkers Scarce.

Porkers were well represented and included all grades of weight and quality. Prime descriptions were relatively scarce.

A strong demand continued to rule, 11d. to 14½d. per lb. being paid for lightweights and from 10d. to 12d. for heavy sorts.

G. C. COLEMAN AND J. R. WILLIAMS.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

December, 1945.

Good Inquiry for Fruit.

Demand generally was satisfactory for all varieties of fruit, and prices for good quality packs were maintained at "ceiling" levels for those lines under control. Furthermore, fairly high rates ruled for a number not subject to price fixing.

Cherries Sell Freely.

Marketing of cherries from the Young district was completed. The principal source of supply late in the month was Orange, with a few consignments from Batlow.

Request was satisfactory and values for the most part were above average, particularly for Margarets of choice quality, which realised 20s., while as much as 25s. was paid for some outstanding quality packs. Light varieties also sold well, and up to 16s. was realised. Factory lines sold from 6s. 6d. early in the month and from 7s. towards the close.

Most Peaches Sell at Maximum.

There was an active inquiry for peaches, which were in limited supply until late December. Values were very firm during the period of short supply, and the greater proportion of offerings realised the maximum of 20s. per half bushel. On Monday, 24th December, there was a substantial increase in the quantities on offer, and although £1 was paid early, the general selling rate was much lower subsequently, prices mainly ranging from 6s. to 15s. Heavy supplies were also forward on the closing markets, when values were weak, and clearances were not effected.

Supplies of Apricots Increase—Values Easier.

The relatively high prices obtained for apricots early in the month could not be maintained following the receipt daily of fairly large quantities from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Towards the close of December values ranged from 6s. to 12s., with extra choice, large fruit selling to 16s. The keeping quality of many Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area packs was poor, and losses occurred.

Some exceptionally good apricots were received from the Mudgee district, and little difficulty was experienced in effecting disposals at 25s. per half bushel.

Marketing of Nectarines Begins.

Only small consignments of nectarines were on offer, and up to 30s. per half case was paid for choice fruit.

Firm Market for Plums.

A good demand existed for the limited supplies of choice large plums available, and 24s., and occasionally higher, was realised. Other grades sold steadily at from 6s. per half bushel.

Slightly Increased Supplies of Apples.

There was a gradual increase in consignments of new season's apples. The bulk mainly comprised culinary varieties, although dessert packs were more plentiful towards the close of the month. For selected sizes of good quality, the maximum of 29s. per bushel was obtained, but much lower prices were accepted for medium quality packs and very small sizes. A small consignment from Victoria of the Twenty Ounce variety reached the market on 28th December. Best sizes realised 29s. per bushel.

New Season's Pears on Offer.

No pears were available until late in December, when small quantities of the Clapp's Favorite variety from local and Victorian sources were recorded. Sales were made at 24s. to 30s. per bushel.

Oranges in Demand.

Supplies of main crop Valencia oranges were light, but fairly large quantities of second crop fruit were available.

The market was very firm for good quality lines at maximum prices, but small sizes of second crop proved slow of sale, some lines being offered at 5s. per bushel. Second crop navels were also obtainable. Where quality and juice content were satisfactory no difficulty was experienced in disposal, and at times up to 20s. per bushel was realised.

Request for Lemons Generally Greater.

Demand for lemons was only moderate as purchases for factory purposes ceased early in the month. The market was lighter during the closing week when values improved, best packs selling to the ceiling level of 20s. per bushel.

Pineapples Scarce.

The bi-weekly consignments of pineapples were light, ranging from about 1,800 to 3,770 cases. The supplies were sufficient for only a relatively small percentage of requirements; and although stocks were rationed some buyers were unable to make any purchases. The fixed maximum price of 21s. 3d. per case ruled.

Papaws Sell Well.

A good demand prevailed for papaws, choice fruit selling to 30s. during the greater part of the month. There was a sharp rise in rates preceding the Christmas vacation, up to 40s. per case being paid, but values eased prior to the close of the month.

Mangoes Plentiful.

Fairly large consignments of mangoes were received from Queensland, over 5,100 cases arriving on 17th December. While up to 30s. per half case, and in some instances more was paid earlier in the month. The increased supplies brought about a sharp reduction in values.

Good Quality Bananas at Maximum Rate.

A strong demand for good quality bananas was in evidence, and the maximum rate of 5¾d. per lb. was paid readily.

Market for Cantaloupes and Rock Melons Weakens.

The principal supplies of rock melons and cantaloupes were drawn from Queensland. The quality was variable, many lines showing breakdown shortly after arrival. Selected packs realised to 30s. per bushel, but values mainly ranged to 25s. Lines showing breakdown were offered at as low as 6s.

Locally grown rock melons made their appearance late in the month, but many lines were lacking in maturity. Sales were slow, and rates were weak.



A busy centre—part of the Agents' Section, City Municipal Markets.

Watermelons in Request.

Small consignments of watermelons from the Richmond district of this State were forward. Demand was keen at the controlled price of 11s. 8d. per cwt.

Peas More Plentiful.

Generally fairly heavy supplies of peas were available during the month. Consignments from Northern and Central Tableland farming areas of this State were augmented by fairly large quantities from Victoria, delivered by road and rail transport.

For choice descriptions, the maximum of 23s. 4d. per bushel was realised on most days, although on a few occasions when stocks were very heavy, a much lower price had to be accepted. For medium quality offerings the price range was wide, and the assistance of canners had to be sought in clearing surplus stocks on some days at 5s. per bushel.

On Christmas Eve, 4,100 bags were forward. Demand was good, and the fixed "ceiling" rate of 23s. 4d. was paid for choice lines. Clearances of all grades were satisfactory. The market was weaker prior to the New Year holiday period, and although 23s. 4d. per bushel was obtained early this rate was not general, prices mainly ranging from 10s. to 21s. per bushel.

Beans Lightly Stocked.

Supplies of beans were very light during the first half of December, and little difficulty was experienced in clearing good and choice quality offerings at the ceiling level of 20s. per bushel. Consignments received from the Far South Coast improved the supply position subsequently, but extremely hot weather at one stage caused a deterioration in the quality of a large percentage of supplies. Disposals of other than choice lots were difficult, and values eased appreciably during the hot spell. The market was lighter during the closing week, and with a good inquiry ruling, the maximum of 20s. was readily paid for best quality lines.

Cabbages Cheaper.

With the curtailment of purchases for service needs and the more plentiful supplies of peas, there was a sharp decline in the values of cabbages. On a number of days this vegetable met a poor inquiry, and although offered at relatively low rates, stocks could not be cleared. Generally, prices ranged to 8s. per dozen, while on a few occasions 14s. was obtained. On Christmas Eve there was a particularly good demand, and sellers were able to obtain up to 24s. per dozen late in the morning for extra choice heads.

Rates for Tomatoes Reach High Levels.

The considerably increased quantities of tomatoes from metropolitan sources forward early in the month brought about a reduction in values, only odd sales being made above 14s. prior to 12th December. These reduced rates did not rule long, as an increase of 10s. per half case was recorded on the 14th December. Late in the month there was a decline in supplies and a general upward movement in values, as high as 35s. per half case being realised on Friday, 28th December.

Consignments from the North Coast eased off appreciably, only small quantities coming forward at the close of December. A good many packs from this area were affected by excess moisture, and losses occurred.

Small Victorian consignments came to hand prior to the close of December, and up to 40s. per bushel was obtained for some lots. It is expected that supplies from this source will increase considerably during January.

Root Vegetables Scarce.

There was a scarcity of both loose and bunched lines. The maximum of 25s. per cwt. was readily obtained for any reasonably good quality loose lots, while bunched lines realised maximum prices. Swede turnips and sweet potatoes were difficult to procure.

Increased Supplies of Cucumbers.

Both apple and green cucumbers from within New South Wales were more plentiful. Values showed fluctuations, peak levels being 12s. for apple and 10s. per half case for green. Purchases of large quantities of the green variety were made for Victorian requirements.

Rates for Lettuce Variable.

Demand for good quality lettuce during the hot spell was very satisfactory, and choice heads commanded as much as 18s. per case. When conditions were cooler and supplies plentiful, best lines sold at lower levels, 8s. being the top rate on a few occasions.

R. D. MEAKER.
