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Light Supply of Backfatters.

Supplies of backfatters for the most part were limited. The general quality was fairly good and offerings usually included several prime, extra-heavy descriptions. The market was very firm, particularly during the first half of the period, when values ranged to 7½d. per lb. Up to £15 8s. 6d. per head was realised.

Keen Demand for Porkers.

Consignments of porkers made the best showing for some considerable time on the first sale-day of the period but at closing, supplies were light and quality only fair. The bulk of the penning comprised pigs suitable for purchase as stores.

Demand was keen throughout, rates ranging to 16¼d. per lb. for lightweights and 12½d. per lb. for heavy sorts.

J. R. WILLIAMS AND G. COLEMAN.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

February, 1946.

FRUIT.**Market for Apples Weakens.**

Consignments of apples from local and interstate sources (including Queensland, Victoria and South Australia) increased as the month advanced. Demand was mainly for large fruit, sizes below 2¾ inch being difficult to sell. The fixed maximum of 29s. per bushel was realised for local Jonathans, Delicious and McIntosh Reds until fairly late in the month but the market was weaker subsequently, few sales exceeding 25s. while rates generally ranged from 10s. to 20s. per bushel.

The first Tasmanian shipment, comprising Worcester Pearmain and Alfristons, was available on 22nd February. From 10s. to 18s. was asked for the first-mentioned variety and 10s. to 12s. for Alfristons but demand was slow and values had to be lowered. At closing, prices were 8s. to 12s. and 8s. to 10s., respectively.

Generally, satisfactory yields of apples are anticipated throughout New South Wales and other States and the general opinion in trade circles is that rates this season will be on a lower scale than last year, when production was particularly light.

Williams Pears Cheaper.

Fairly large consignments of Williams pears were received from Victoria and towards the close of the month increased quantities of this variety were forwarded from orchards in inland districts of this State.

Request generally was satisfactory for green packs but prices could not be maintained; 14s. to 16s. secured the best lines on offer while much lower rates were accepted for small sizes and packs that had reached maturity.

Demand for Valentias Improves.

Marketing of Valencia oranges was confined principally to second-crop fruit from coastal groves. Demand was quiet early but an improvement was noticeable when supplies were reduced following unsettled weather in growing centres, and during this period counts of up to 216 realised the maximum of 20s. per bushel. There was an increase in supplies towards the close of the month and values, apart from a few selected lines, were easier at 6s. to 15s.

Lemons in Request.

Choice lemons found ready sale and realisations for counts of 125 and higher were for the most part at ceiling levels of 20s. 9d. to 25s. per bushel according to size. Some plain grade packs were offered from as low as 10s.

Choice Peaches Sell Well.

With the completion of the harvesting of the coastal peach crop, buyers had to turn their attention to inland supplies. The principal variety sought was J. H. Hale and some particularly attractive packs came to hand from Central Tableland growing areas. Generally, choice lines realised 18s. and on some occasions 20s. per half case was obtained.

Consignments from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area were available but these supplies comprised mostly canning varieties and values generally ranged from 5s. to 12s. with some sales at higher levels.

Quality of Nectarines Indifferent.

Large quantities of nectarines were on offer during the first half of the month. The keeping quality of a large proportion was unsatisfactory and clearances of some lines were made at low prices. Towards the close, however, consignments were much lighter and values showed improvement, up to 20s. per half case being paid for choice, large fruit.

Muscatel Grapes Meet Good Enquiry.

Demand for grapes was mainly for muscatels, extra choice lines selling to 30s. per half case on a few occasions, although 25s. was the ruling rate over the greater part of the period. Other grades showed a good deal of variation in values, some lots selling from 10s. per half case. White muscats were lightly stocked; while up to 35s. was paid, rates generally were around 25s. for choice descriptions. Other white varieties were slow of sale at prices ranging from 6s. to 14s.

Heavier Supplies of Bananas.

Some large consignments of bananas were received early in the month. Owing to the fruit maturing rapidly, and the presence of breakdown in many packs, disposals had to be made to the best advantage, with the result that as low as 6s. per case was accepted. Despite the relatively large quantities of what could be termed inferior quality lines, satisfactory prices were obtained for choice fruit. The market was firm at closing, supplies having fallen off appreciably.

More Pineapples Available.

Demand for pineapples was active during the first half of the month, the bulk of sales being effected at the maximum of 21s. 3d. per case. Heavy consignments were forward subsequently and as "blister" was present in many lines, buyers did not operate so freely. Prices had to be reduced in an endeavour to stimulate sales but stocks could not be cleared before the receipt of fresh consignments. At closing, rates ranged from 14s. to 20s. per tropical case but much lower prices were accepted for inferior quality lines.

Light Supplies of Papaws.

Only small quantities of papaws were received. Good quality fruit realised high prices, up to 40s. per case being obtained. The first of the new season's crop was expected to be available early in March.

Cantaloupes Plentiful but Quality Variable.

Consignments of cantaloupes from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area were heavy at times. The quality of the offerings varied considerably, many lines showing breakdown shortly after receipt at the markets, with the result that low prices had to be accepted, while some packs became a total loss. Good quality lots sold well, up to 16s. per crate being obtained.

Large Plums in Demand.

Supplies of plums were drawn from inland sources, the coastal crop "cutting out" early in February. Inquiry was satisfactory for large fruit of good quality, up to 18s. per half case and occasionally more being realised early, but towards the close of February it was difficult to obtain above 14s. Small fruit was mostly sold to factories.

Choice Passionfruit Scarce.

Only very light supplies of passionfruit were available. The market was firm for the few choice packs included, and up to 40s. per half case was secured.

VEGETABLES.**Certain Vegetables Freed from Control.**

Price control of certain vegetables, including peas, beans, sweet potatoes and pumpkins was lifted as from Monday, 11th February. On some days, rates for both peas and beans reached higher levels than the maximum previously permitted but on other occasions the prices realised did not reach the old "ceilings."

The few consignments of sweet potatoes received, realised to 28s. per cwt.; this compares with the previous fixed maximum of 16s. Generally, rates for pumpkins were well below the controlled price of 22s. 6d. per cwt.

Pea Values Fluctuate.

With relatively light supplies of peas on offer during the first ten days of February, values for choice descriptions were firm at the maximum of 23s. 4d. per bushel. During the remainder of the month, prices showed wide fluctuations and on one occasion, when supplies were delayed owing to a transport dispute, up to 40s. per bushel was requested for the limited quantities available. Generally, the market was maintained at around 24s. to 28s. per bushel for choicest lines, although there was a sharp drop in rates on Wednesday, 27th February, when 16s. per bushel was accepted; for discoloured and poor quality lots as low as 5s. was paid.

Higher Prices for Choice Beans.

Good quality beans realised the maximum of 20s. for the first few days of the month, but a heavy consignment of 2,600 bags (mainly from the Far South Coast and Victoria) on 4th February brought about a sharp decline in prices; early sales were made at 16s. but the bulk realised from 5s. to 12s. per bushel. On the following day, 2,450 bags were offered, including 900 bags carried over, and values showed a further downward movement, 10s. being the top rate.

Supplies received subsequently ranged from heavy to light, but rarely did the price of choice lines drop below 20s., while as much as 35s. per bushel was paid on those occasions when the quantities on offer were limited.

On the last day of February, fresh stocks comprised about 120 bags but carry-over lots aggregating 490 bags were also available. For choice, 20s. and in a few instances 22s. was obtained, but rates for carry-over supplies were much lower.

Slower Demand for Tomatoes.

Demand for tomatoes was quieter than during the preceding month despite reduced supplies from local sources. Choice, coloured metropolitan packs sold to 35s. per half case early in the month, but at the close only a few specially-selected lines were realising 20s.

Regular bi-weekly consignments were received from Southern Queensland, the largest single consignment being slightly over 8,000 half cases. Request was very slow during a period of about ten days but movement in stocks was brighter towards the end of the month at prices ranging from 8s. to 12s. with specials to 14s. per half case.

Inland Cauliflowers on Offer.

Small consignments of cauliflowers from the Bathurst district were available throughout the period. The quality generally was only medium although there was a gradual improvement as the month advanced. For the choicest selected large "heads" up to 36s. per dozen was paid while 6s. was accepted for small sizes.

Choice Cabbages Dearer.

The market for choice cabbages was very satisfactory, large heads selling to 30s. per dozen. Small sizes proved difficult to sell on a few occasions but mainly good clearances were made.

Carrots in Request.

There was good inquiry for both bunched and bagged carrots and best lines sold at maximum prices. Supplies of bagged lines were relatively light early in February but stocks increased considerably subsequently. Some lines affected by breakdown had to be sold to the best advantage while others became a total loss.

Choice Lettuce Scarce.

Reduced quantities of lettuce were forward and the percentage of choice lines was small. Prices for best quality lots reached 20s. and a few sales were made at still higher rates.

R. D. MEAKER.

SALES OF FARM PRODUCE AT ALEXANDRIA AND SUSSEX STREET, SYDNEY.

February, 1946.

Supplies of Tasmanian Potatoes Increase.

Following exceptionally light consignments from Tasmania in January, stocks arriving in Sussex-street in February from that source showed a marked increase, supplies totalling 112,125 bags compared with 43,050 bags in the previous month. The tubers mostly comprised new-grade Bismarcks, although a few new Brownells as well as about 800 bags of old-season's Brownells were included. Approximately 50,000 bags were made available for general trading, the balance going to essential services.

Supplies arriving at Alexandria Goods Yard from Victoria were on a reduced scale and comprised 9,988 bags. The bulk consisted of Carmans, with a few Manistees and Brownells.

Supplies from local centres at Alexandria continued to be very light and aggregated 6,705 bags, including 110 bags of seed. These tubers were new grade Factors and chats. Most of these supplies were available for civilian use, about 1,000 bags being for essential services.

Rates during the month were unchanged as follows:—

Wholesale Prices to Retailers:—

Local and Interstate—No. 1 Grade £7 17s. 6d.

Undergrades £6 7s. 6d. per ton.

Rates for N.S.W. grown potatoes for delivery to country areas are as quoted, plus freight from loading station; prices for Interstate potatoes to N.S.W. country areas are as quoted, plus freight from Sydney or loading station, whichever is the lower.

Primary merchants' prices to wholesalers are £1 5s. per ton less than the figures quoted.