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GENERAL NOTES AND NEWS.

The Federal Government has decided to extend Commonwealth Control of the egg industry in Australia until 31st December, 1946. Previously it had been arranged that control would cease on 30th June but the extension was deemed necessary because arrangements for the formation of a company representing the Egg Marketing Boards throughout Australia cannot be given effect to at this stage.

Regular consignments of perishable vegetables, chiefly Brussels Sprouts, are being received in Sydney by air from Victoria. It is noteworthy that the produce on the whole reaches the market in much better condition than by other means of transport and is of interest in view of the article appearing elsewhere in this publication on the future of air transport of perishable primary products.

The usual decline in supplies of green vegetables, principally peas and beans, is noticeable in the Sydney Municipal Markets. Values have reached very high levels compared with the war years when Price Control Regulations fixed the maximum rates at which various vegetables could be sold.

During his projected visit to New Zealand, the Minister for Agriculture will discuss with the New Zealand Government matters affecting trade in agricultural produce between Australia and the Dominion. Mr. Graham has stated that there is ample opportunity for expansion of reciprocal trade between the two countries which would be to the common advantage of both.

The Chief of the Division recently attended a conference of members and officers of the Cumberland County Council and representatives of the primary producers in the County of Cumberland during which preliminary talks took place concerning future planning. In a special address, Sir Stanton Hicks, of the Adelaide University, stressed the value of areas close to large cities for producing fruits and vegetables and deplored the present tendency to make these areas residential.

The Associated Poultry Farmers of Australia recently requested an increase in the price of eggs or alternatively, a subsidy. It is understood the Prices Branch has decided that although the Association had established the claim that the price of poultry foodstuffs had increased, it was felt that an increase in egg prices would encourage additional production which, in the light of the huge expansion made in recent years, would militate against the interests of producers.

The Chief of the Division has had preliminary discussions with the Egg Marketing Board in relation to arrangements for the conduct of a poll for the election of producer-representatives to the Board which will be held in October next. A new scheme has been evolved for collecting the names of eligible producers which is expected to result in the rolls being as complete as possible.

In the course of an address to the annual conference of the Australian Institute of Dairy Factory Managers and Secretaries (N.S.W. Division) the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, Mr. Scully, stated that it is hoped, in 1946, to export at least 70,000 tons of butter, of which 60,000 tons will be shipped direct to Britain and the remainder to the order of the British Ministry of Food. Exports of cheese on Ministry of Food account are expected to reach 13,000 tons, of which 8,000 tons will go to the United Kingdom. It is also anticipated that processed milk to the equivalent of 19 million gallons will be shipped under the direction of the Ministry of Food.

Australian supplies of dairy products to the Australian and Allied Services based in Australia for the period 1943/1945 totalled 55,000 and 16,000 tons of butter and cheese, respectively, and the equivalent of 67,000,000 gallons of processed milk.

Figures of bonded wine supplies in Britain, issued for the first time since the war, show that 2,912,000 gallons were in bond at the end of March, compared with 9,600,000 gallons in March, 1938. The total includes: Australian 727,000 gallons, South African 673,000 gallons, French 117,000 gallons, Spanish 611,000 gallons and Portuguese 574,000 gallons.

It was of interest to learn that the Commonwealth Bureau of Agricultural Economics has adopted a generalised map of crop and livestock belts for Australia prepared in this Division towards the end of 1945. This map is the first of its kind to be published in Australia and has been used by the Commonwealth authorities to assist preliminary surveys. The Acting Director has also included the map in material prepared at the request of authorities in America. In the matter of mapping of land use in Australia, the Commonwealth and New South Wales authorities will work in close collaboration in order to ensure a common system of classification.