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increases of up to 10s. per head over prices ruling at the final sale in December were noted at the opening auctions of 1946. No sales were held between 18th December, 1945, and 8th January, 1946. At the sale held on the latter date, prices ranged to £8 4s. 6d. per head, and up to 10½d. on a "per lb." basis. Estimated values exceeded 9d. per lb. for all pigs in the 100 lb. to 200 lb. range of weights. The high level of values was maintained throughout the month for light weights but rates were a little easier for heavy descriptions during the second half of the period.

Prime Backfatters Scarce.

Consignments of backfatters were variable but supplies generally were light and there was a shortage of prime heavy descriptions. A noticeable proportion of the pennings comprised boars. A dearer market ruled for this class of pig, rates ranging chiefly to 7¼d. per lb. with 7½d. being realised at times.

Keen Demand for Stores.

Porkers were in moderate supply and comprised all grades of weight. Quality was variable but the bulk of the pennings was suitable for purchase as stores. Demand was even stronger than was experienced in the previous month and up to 15d. per lb. was paid for suitable lightweights. Heavy sorts realised to 12d. per lb.

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

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

January, 1946.

FRUIT.

Good Quality Fruit in Request.

Demand for choice fruit was very good during the month. Inquiry, however, was not satisfactory for a number of lines of small apples, some stone fruits and second-crop Valencia oranges. Clearances of these types of fruit were difficult to effect, the limited quantity of sugar available to housewives appearing to be the principal factor affecting the sale of small stone fruits and cooking apples, while the poor appearance of many lines of oranges hindered their sale.

Dessert Apples Sell Readily.

There was a gradual increase in supplies of apples, which included Queensland and Victorian consignments. Coloured dessert varieties, which comprised only a small proportion of stocks, met a good demand, the best trade sizes realising the maximum of 29s. per bushel. On the other hand, very small fruit was difficult to sell, rates ranging from 10s.

Some Jonathans were received from Southern Queensland towards the close of January, and little difficulty was experienced in effecting disposals of this fruit at the ceiling rate of 29s.

The shortage of sugar restricted sales of culinary varieties and values generally were easier. Marketing of Granny Smiths from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and some other inland centres was being carried out; the bulk of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area fruit was small and clearances were slow. The few large sizes available met ready sale, at prices ranging to 25s., although early in the month 29s. was realised.

Rates for Pears Ease.

Only light supplies of pears were on offer early in the month, but consignments from within New South Wales and from Victoria increased appreciably towards the close. The season for Clapp's Favourite was short and values of this variety eased quickly when supplies of Williams became more plentiful. Demand was restricted while the fruit lacked maturity, but inquiry improved rapidly when coloured lines were available. Values weakened as consignments reached larger proportions and at closing only a few specials were realising above 20s. per bushel, the range being from 12s.

Choice Peaches in Request.

The market for peaches generally was satisfactory. Demand for choice large well-coloured fruit was very good, many lines realising 18s. to 20s. per half case. Late in the month, marketing of Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area supplies commenced but the quality showed a wide variation.

Request was only moderate with values tending downwards at the close of the month when 6s. to 12s. were the ruling rates.

Only small consignments of Victorian peaches came to hand.

Apricot and Cherry Season Ends.

The marketing of cherries and apricots was completed. Choice packs of both realised very satisfactory prices, cherries selling to 24s. per quarter case, while apricots brought to 25s. per half case.

Choice, Large Plums Sell Well.

Large plums met a good request throughout the month, and up to 25s. per half case was obtained. Small fruit was difficult to sell to retailers, but factories purchased fair quantities. Angelinas from inland orchards and from Victoria were available; some choice, large fruit grown in this State sold up to 22s. per half case.

Nectarines More Plentiful.

Considerable quantities of nectarines from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and other inland sources came to hand towards the close of January. Good quality lines sold satisfactorily, but the presence of breakdown in a number of packs from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area resulted in clearances of this affected fruit being made at low prices.

Pineapples More Plentiful.

Consignments of pineapples were much heavier, 8,330 cases being received on Monday, 21st January. Despite the larger supplies, demand showed no slackening and prompt clearances of practically all lines were made at the ceiling level of 21s. 3d. per case.

Mangoes and Papaws Sell at High Prices.

The season for mangoes was practically finished, only small quantities reaching the market at the close of the month. Prices generally were higher than those ruling in past years, up to 40s. per bushel being paid at times. Papaws were also in relatively light supply and up to 40s. was secured for choice packs.

Hot Weather Favours Water Melon Sales.

During the greater part of January, the excessively hot weather created an active demand for water melons, and growers had little difficulty in disposing of large quantities at the maximum of 11s. 8d. per cwt. A few days prior to the close of the month, supplies increased to a point exceeding request and the general trend in values was downward, only isolated sales being made at the maximum.

Grapes Realise High Prices.

With increasing supplies of Muscatel grapes coming forward, the high prices which ruled early in the month (up to 45s. being obtained, eased to some extent, although 30s. per half case was still being realised at the close for extra-choice packs. Rates for Hamburgs were also easier. Small consignments of Queensland grapes were available, but the quality of most lines was variable, and some had to be sold to the best advantage.

Market for Bananas Steady.

Good quality bananas were in request, and the ceiling rate of 5¾d. per lb. was realised, only small quantities of lower grades being sold at lower rates.

Cantaloupes Cheaper.

With the appearance of Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area cantaloupes, there was a general decline in values. Early in the month, up to 40s. per tropical case was obtained, but prices fell sharply as consignments from the Area increased, and at closing it was difficult to obtain 20s.

VEGETABLES.

Unfavourable Conditions Affect Supplies of Green Vegetables.

Adverse weather in most growing areas was experienced during January. Little rain was received and temperatures were high. Towards the close of the month a number of lines, particularly peas and beans, were in short supply.

Peas Become Short Supplied.

During early January, daily consignments of peas ranged from around 2,000 to as many as 3,800 bags. Demand was satisfactory for choice descriptions, up to 20s. per bushel being paid, but disposal of a number of lower grade lines had to be made to canneries in order to clear stocks.

Supplies showed a falling-off during the balance of the month, and the quality of many lots was affected by the hot, dry conditions. For choice descriptions, the maximum of 23s. 4d. per bushel was realised, but lower quality lines sold from 10s. During the last few days of the month the quantities coming forward were insufficient to meet trade requirements, and practically all lots sold at the top rate of 23s. 4d. per bushel. Stocks were drawn from the Northern and Central Tablelands, no interstate consignments being received.

Beans Scarce.

Receivals of beans generally were light, and only on a few occasions was the supply sufficient to bring about a lowering of prices of choice descriptions below the ceiling of 20s. per bushel. Late in the month consignments to agents' floors were very light, only 140 bags being available on one occasion.

The bulk of supplies was drawn from the far South Coast, only small quantities coming from the Gosford district, while grower sellers' lots were very limited. The outlook for an improvement in supplies is not bright under existing weather conditions unless interstate consignments come to hand.

Choice Tomatoes Realise High Prices.

Growers of choice tomatoes in the metropolitan area were favoured by a good demand for their produce. Although rates varied during the month, realisations were on a much higher level than during the corresponding period last year. On a number of days 35s. per half case was paid, while as much as 40s. was obtained. This compares with the top rate in January, 1945, of 20s.

Consignments of Victorian tomatoes were received, but the quality of supplies showed considerable variation. Many packs could not be sold to retail traders, and clearances had to be made to factories at low prices.

Bi-weekly consignments of Southern Queensland tomatoes were also available. The quality of a number of lines was very good but breakdown was apparent in some packs, and values were affected. Generally, rates ranged to 16s. per half case, although 20s. and higher was obtained at times.

Rates for Cabbages Advance.

The market for cabbages was somewhat restricted early in the month, but request improved later and values showed a sharp upward trend just prior to the close, when choice heads realised to 20s. per dozen. This upward movement was largely owing to the light supplies of peas and beans.

New season's cauliflowers on offer.

Small consignments of cauliflowers were to hand from the Bathurst district. The general quality was poor and low prices had to be accepted.

Carrots Sell Freely.

Keen demand was in evidence for both bunched and bagged carrots at the ceiling rates of 3¼d. per lb. for bunched and 25s. per cwt. for bagged lots.

Rates for Lettuce Improve.

Lettuce were plentiful early in the month, and values were fairly low, largely owing to the indifferent quality of a large percentage of supplies. With the exceptionally hot conditions prevailing, and reduced quantities coming forward, the market was much firmer during the last week of the month, when up to 18s., and occasionally 20s. per case was paid for choice heads.

Cucumbers in Reduced Supply.

Cucumbers were fairly plentiful early in January, but supplies were very light at the close with prices at considerably higher levels, up to 15s. per half case being paid for the green variety.

Beetroot Sells Freely.

Reduced quantities of bunched beetroot were offered by grower sellers. Demand was active and rates were very firm, some lines realising as much as 12s. per dozen bunches. Bagged beetroot was also lightly stocked, and the maximum of 23s. per cwt. was paid for good quality lines.

R. D. MEAKER.