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FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

April, 1946.

FRUIT.

Apple Supplies Decline—Values Firmer.

The market was well supplied with apples early in the month, consignments from local sources, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland being available as well as shipments from Tasmania. There was a considerable decline in the quantities forwarded subsequently; prior to the close of the period, Queensland and South Australia had ceased sending, while a marked falling-off in the quantities from within New South Wales and from Victoria was apparent.

Demand for coloured, dessert varieties, especially Jonathan and Delicious, was very satisfactory and rates for both lines advanced, Jonathans realising to 18s., while up to 22s. per bushel was paid for Delicious. Granny Smiths, also, sold well, up to 18s. being obtained for selected packs.

Rates for Victorian lines of the varieties mentioned also advanced towards the close of April. Delays in transit affected the quality of many lines of Tasmanian apples, and this was reflected in realisations.

Rates for Choice Pears Advance Sharply.

Values of pears were fairly steady during the first half of April, but with a falling-off in supplies, there was a sharp rise in prices, New South Wales Packham's Triumph and Winter Coles selling to 25s. per bushel during the last few days of the month.

Victorian Packhams were available for the first three weeks, but no consignments came to hand subsequently, although Josephines were received.

Some good quality Tasmanian Winter Coles sold up to 18s. per bushel, Beurre Bosc to 12s. and Doyenne du Comice to 16s.; many packs, however, had to be sold to the best advantage owing to a ripe to over-ripe stage having been reached through storage in ships' holds over lengthy periods.

New Season's Navels Affect Sales of Second Crop Valencias.

Large quantities of second-crop Valencias were forward. Good quality, large Valencias sold well but agents found it difficult at times to dispose of very small fruit. Up to 20s. per bushel was realised for best packs but 4s. and lower was accepted for some under-sized fruit.

Values were easing rapidly late in the month owing to the commencement of marketing of new-season's navel oranges from coastal groves of New South Wales as well as from Queensland. A demand ruled for some coloured navels received about the third week of the month and 20s. per bushel was paid but rates tended downward as consignments increased. Some well-coloured navels from Queensland sold to 30s. per bushel but values were weakening prior to closing.

Trading in grapefruit was mainly for Queensland supplies. Choice packs sold well at prices ranging to 25s., while occasionally 27s. 6d. per bushel was obtained.

Queensland Lemons Compete with Local Supplies.

Only a moderate demand ruled for lemons from Coastal areas of this State and prices mainly ranged from 8s. to 16s., although up to 20s. per bushel was realised at times for choice lines of selected counts.

Consignments of Queensland lemons were also available and rates for best quality lots ranged from 20s. to 26s. per bushel. Plain grades sold from 10s. to 16s.

Market for Bananas Firm.

The large quantities of ripe to over-ripe bananas available until about mid-April had a depressing effect on the values of better-class fruit and it was not until disposals of poor quality stocks were effected that the position improved. Towards the close of the period, rates were firm for good quality packs, up to 42s. per case, and in a few instances more, being realised.

Rates for Choice Pineapples Maintained.

Bi-weekly consignments of pineapples ranged to about 9,000 cases, although the quantities coming forward late in April were reduced to around 5,900 cases.

"Blister" was much in evidence early in the month and affected lines had to be sold to the best advantage; however, towards the close of April this trouble was less manifest and values generally were firm at 18s. to 21s. 3d. per case, only very small sizes being cheaper.

Choice Grapes Sell Satisfactorily.

Fairly large quantities of Cornichon grapes were forward, mainly from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Demand was satisfactory for good quality packs but clearances of lower grades were very slow at times.

Consignments of Muscatels from other inland areas of New South Wales continued to come to hand. Choice packs sold to 20s. while a few "specials" realised to 25s. per half case. Considerable quantities of lower grade lots were purchased for wine-making at 6s. to 8s.

Other Fruits.

Small consignments of custard apples were received from Queensland and sales were made at 14s. to 20s. per half case.

Passionfruit were scarce and rates for choice packs were very firm at 30s. to 40s. per half case at the close of the period.

Price control was removed from apples, pears and citrus fruits as from 23rd April, 1946.

VEGETABLES.

Heavy Rains Reduce Supplies.

Green vegetables were fairly plentiful early in the month but following a period of very heavy rains, which began about mid-April, there was a marked decline in consignments and a sharp rise in values followed.

Peas Dearer at Closing.

Consignments of peas received during the first week of April generally exceeded the 2,000-bag mark daily. Only a small percentage of extra-choice sold above 20s. per bushel, values for best quality being mainly around 18s. Some purchases were made for Victoria during this period.

The market during the following week was steady until Friday 12th April, when up to 30s. per bushel was realised. A good deal of frost injury was apparent in a number of Tableland consignments, some lines being unsaleable.

Considerably reduced supplies were forward from the 15th to 18th April and prices advanced appreciably, up to 42s. per bushel being paid for choice descriptions. Rates were also very firm during the closing week; on three days, top rates reached 30s. to 32s. and occasionally higher.

Beans Generally Well Supplied.

Plentiful supplies of beans were available early in the month. Disposals were slow in respect of medium to lower quality descriptions and the carry-over of these grades was heavy on some days. Up to 14s., and occasionally 16s., was paid for choice lines on 1st April, but rates rarely exceeded 10s. per bushel during the period 2nd to 5th April, while 7s. to 8s. was the range of prices for the first three days of the second week.

The market was firmer subsequently, much higher prices being realised during the week ending 19th April. As much as 32s. per bushel was obtained owing to a curtailment of supplies as a result of exceptionally heavy rains. Values slumped on Monday, 23rd April, following the receipt of much larger consignments, it being difficult to obtain above 8s. late in the morning. Subsequently, there was an improvement in the market and 12s. to 14s. per bushel was paid for best quality lots.

Steady Market for Tomatoes.

Only moderate supplies of tomatoes were received from Metropolitan sources. Demand was variable but prices showed only slight fluctuations, coloured packs of choicest quality selling from 18s. to 20s., while on a few occasions 22s. per half case was obtained.

Consignments from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and other inland centres of New South Wales realised from 5s. to 14s., with a few extra-choice lines to 16s.

Cauliflowers Meet Good Inquiry.

Large quantites of cauliflowers continued to come forward from the Bathurst district and towards the close of the month some lots grown in the County of Cumberland were available.

Demand generally was good although very heavy consignments on some days had a steadying effect on sales and values. Top prices were obtained during the period 15th to 18th April when up to 40s. per dozen was paid, while only on one occasion was less than 24s. per dozen accepted for choicest, large heads.

Steady Request for Cabbages.

Despite the plentiful supplies of cauliflowers, there was a steady demand for cabbages on most days, although on a few occasions, stocks could not be cleared.

Top rates were 12s. to 14s. per dozen throughout the greater part of the month, although as much as 30s. per dozen was paid during the third week.

Carrots Plentiful but Swedes Lightly Stocked.

Bagged carrots were well supplied but there was a scarcity of parsnips at times. The market for swede turnips was very firm just prior to the close of the month, choice selling to 20s. per cwt.

Rates for Lettuce Improve.

Good supplies of lettuce were available until late in the month, when there was a marked falling-off in the quantities coming forward. Prices realised during the first two weeks ranged from 3s. to 8s., a few to 10s. per case, whilst 12s. to 14s. and higher was paid towards the close of the month.

Brussels Sprouts Available.

Marketing of Victorian Brussels Sprouts commenced during the second week of the month, consignments coming by air and rail transport. As much as 26s. per box was paid for some extra-choice lines but with increased quantities coming forward, prices at closing were 10s. to 18s. with a few at 20s. per box.

R. D. MEAKER.

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

April, 1946.

Potato Supplies Increase.

Larger supplies of potatoes were received in Sussex street from Tasmania, consignments totalling 165,209 bags. The tubers consisted of Brownells, Bismarcks, Snowflakes, Up-to-Dates and Pinkeyes. There was a substantial percentage released for civilian use but clearances were easily effected.

Consignments to Alexandria from Victoria increased considerably, 21,800 bags being received, compared with 5,392 bags in March. Supplies mostly comprised No. 1 grade Carmans and Snowflakes.