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FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

March, 1948.

FRUIT.

Dessert Apples More Plentiful and Prices Again Decline.

Offerings of dessert apples were much larger during March, receipts from New South Wales growing areas being augmented by considerable consignments from several interstate sources. Values showed a gradual decline throughout the period, particularly for Jonathan, which were the most plentiful. First consignments of new season apples from Tasmania arrived during the last week. Quotations towards closing were as follow:—*New South Wales*: Delicious, 10s. to 18s., few 20s.; Jonathan, 6s. to 12s., special coloured to 14s., few 15s.; Granny Smith, 6s. to 12s., special to 14s. *Queensland*: Delicious, 12s. to 18s.; Jonathan, 8s. to 14s.; Granny Smith, 10s. to 14s. *Tasmanian*: Jonathan, 12s., few 14s. to 16s.; Worcester, 6s. to 10s., few to 14s.; Cleopatra, 8s. to 12s., few to 14s.; Prince Alfred, 7s. to 8s., few to 10s.; Alfriston, 8s. to 9s., few 10s. to 12s.; MacIntosh Red, Cox's Orange Pippin and Duke of Clarence, 10s. to 12s., few to 14s.; Alexander, 10s., few 12s.; Apex, 16s., few 18s. *South Australian*: Jonathan, 10s. to 13s. *Victorian*: Jonathan, 10s. to 12s., few 14s.; Delicious, 14s. to 18s. per bushel case. The highest prices quoted for Tasmanian varieties were obtained for early deliveries from the first shipment only and were not maintained subsequently.

Consignments of Williams Pears Cease Towards Closing.

Realisations for Williams pears from Victorian and New South Wales growers showed little fluctuation throughout the month, most sales ranging from 8s. to 12s. per bushel case with special packs to 14s. on occasions. However, a considerable proportion of offerings opened up in a fully ripe condition and was disposed of at reduced prices, ranging, in some instances, from as low as 2s. per case. Many lines from the Central Tableland region showed internal breakdown which was attributed to the unusual rainy season. Towards the end of the month, most of the stocks on offer were from cool store. Other varieties which were released on the market towards closing realised the following prices:—*Victorian*: Packham's Triumph, 11s. to 14s., few 15s. to 16s.; Beurre Bosc, 10s. to 14s.; Josephine, 11s. to 12s. *New South Wales*: Winter Cole, 10s. to 14s. per bushel case.

Offerings of Peaches Decline.

Supplies of peaches coming to hand from inland growing areas declined gradually throughout the month. Early in the period, stocks were plentiful but the market recovered from the recession recorded in last report, and most sales ranged from 6s. to 12s. per half case, with special to 14s. These rates were maintained throughout the balance of the period, and, at closing, stocks were

mainly from cool store and were principally of the Frome variety. The moderate consignments of yellow-flesh peaches from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area generally were not in demand from the retail trade and brought principally from 5s. to 8s. per half case, many lines affected by fungus being considerably cheaper. Receipts from Victoria were only moderate and generally were lacking in keeping qualities.

Plums Mainly Over-supplied.

Throughout the greater part of the month, supplies of plums were well in excess of requirements, and sellers experienced difficulty in maintaining disposals at prices ranging from 4s. 6d. to 10s. per half case. Towards closing, however, offerings were smaller and values commenced to improve, being highest on the last trading day, when best packs brought 14s. and occasionally 16s.

Inland Grapes Replace Local Supplies.

A marked decline both in quality and quantity was apparent in receipts of grapes from near-metropolitan growing areas, and towards the end of the month trading was confined principally to stocks from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, although some supplies of Black Muscats from other inland districts were available. Inquiry from the retail trade continued to be fairly good and prices were maintained at moderate levels. Representative quotations were as follow:—*New South Wales*: (M.I.A.) Cornichon, 10s. to 14s., few 16s.; Waltham Cross, 8s. to 14s., few 16s.; Gordo, 8s. to 12s., special 14s., few 16s.; Doradillo, 8s. to 10s., few 12s.; (other New South Wales) Black Muscat (coastal), 7s. to 14s., choice to 20s., few special to 25s., (inland), 8s. to 16s.; White Muscat, 12s. to 20s., few special to 24s.; Doradillo, 7s. to 9s., few 10s. to 12s.; Cornichon, 10s. to 14s., few 16s. *Queensland*: Gros Colman, 6s. to 10s., special to 14s.; Black Muscat, 7s. to 12s., special to 15s.; Waltham Cross, 6s. to 12s., few special higher per half case. Only a small percentage of consignments from Queensland was of special quality on arrival. Some lines included a large percentage of small berries and small bunches, whilst some breakdown in transit was noticeable.

Rates for Bananas Advance.

A gradual falling off in supplies of bananas was apparent and prices showed a corresponding advance. Opening quotations ranged principally from 8s. to 18s. per banana case but at closing had advanced to range from 16s. to 27s., with special to 30s. A percentage of small, ripe and inferior fruit was sold at reduced prices.

Receipts of Main Crop Valencia Oranges Decline.

Consignments of main crop Valencia oranges from coastal and near-metropolitan districts practically ceased early in the month, and subsequent trading was confined principally to second crop lines which were not as popular with the retail trade. Throughout the greater part of the period, stocks were fairly heavy and most realisations varied from 5s. to 12s. per bushel case according to size and condition. In the last few days, however, supplies

dwindled and rates advanced sharply to range from 10s. to 20s. The few main crop coastal lots available were mainly from the Camden region and were quoted at 10s. to 16s., special to 20s., per bushel case. Inquiry for main crop Valencias from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area continued to be keen and prices firmed, ranging mainly from 15s. to 26s., according to count, with a tendency to advance sharply in the last two days of the month.

Rates for Lemons Fairly Well Maintained.

Receivals of lemons were fairly regular during the period and prices generally were well maintained at the levels recorded at the close of last report, most sales ranging from 6s. to 12s. per bushel case according to size; but on occasions specially selected packs brought 14s. to 16s. Very small sizes, however, were over-supplied and difficult to clear, even at as low as 3s. First consignments of Queensland lemons came to hand about the middle of the month and met a keen inquiry, standards and specials bringing from 16s. to 25s., with small from 12s. per bushel case.

Choice Passionfruit Again Scarce.

Passionfruit of choice quality continued to be scarce during March, and realisations were unaltered at 16s. to 20s., with occasional sales to 22s. per half case. Medium to good grades, however, were at all times ample for requirements at prices ranging from 8s. to 14s.

Dull Demand for Inferior Persimmons.

Most of the persimmons received were in green condition on arrival and were generally of unattractive appearance. Agents experienced considerable difficulty in effecting clearances at prices ranging from 2s. to 6s. per half case. However, a few special packs in clean and ripe condition from local growers sold well at 7s. to 8s. and occasionally to 10s.

Cantaloupes Fairly Dear.

Realisations for cantaloupes from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area remained at fairly high levels, ranging on most selling days from 18s. to 26s. per crate. At times of scarcity, prices advanced to as much as 32s. Bushels were quoted principally at 8s. to 16s. A percentage of green, small and inferior fruit was cheaper at all times.

Consignments from Queensland Irregular.

As a result of the dislocation of rail transport from Queensland, supplies of fruit and vegetables by this means were irregular during the month and generally were smaller than normal. However, moderate quantities came forward by road including one large organised convoy which reached the market during the third week.

Papaws Scarce and Dear.

Offerings of Queensland papaws were very light and rates remained at the high levels recorded in last report, ranging mainly from 25s. to 35s. per tropical case for choice fruit, with occasional sales to 40s. Some inferior and damaged packs, however, were available from 10s.

Prices for Pineapples Generally Higher.

Pineapples from Queensland were well supplied at opening when prices ranged mainly from 16s. to 24s. per tropical case, but by the end of the first week interruptions to deliveries had resulted in rates advancing to 30s. These levels were maintained until the middle of the month when a slight decline in prices occurred and most transactions thereafter took place within the range of 16s. to 26s. "Water Blister" was very prevalent, and this factor had a depressing influence on demand from the retail trade which was primarily responsible for the decline in values around the middle of the period.

Other Fruit.

Representative quotations for other main lines were as follow:—Grapefruit (Queensland), 15s. to 25s., few to 28s.; Quinces, 7s. to 12s., early sales to 14s. per bushel case; Custard Apples (Queensland), 15s. to 25s., few to 30s.; Avocados (Queensland), Fuerte, 25s. to 35s., few to 40s., other 6s. to 14s. per half bushel case; watermelons, 15s. to 36s., few to 40s., isolated sales to 60s., very small and inferior lower, per dozen.

VEGETABLES.**Peas Generally Dear.**

Consignments of peas were lighter during March, a total of approximately 44,000 bags being received. Supplies were drawn almost wholly from the Central Tableland region. During the first week, stocks were light and prices advanced, ranging from 12s. to 24s., with a few special to 28s. per bushel. Subsequently, however, rates declined, and for the remainder of the period ranged from 8s. to 16s., with only occasional sales to 20s. Towards closing, choice green lines in fully mature condition were comparatively scarce and the bulk of offerings opened up either in a discoloured condition or showing a large percentage of unfilled pods.

Beans More Heavily Supplied.

Greatly increased stocks of beans were available, the 24,500 bags consigned to agents from New South Wales growers being augmented by 700 from Queensland and 50 from Victoria, in addition to large offerings in the growers' section of the market. Early in the period prices were high, particularly as a result of the shortage of peas, and realisations varied mainly from 6s. to 16s., with occasional sales to 20s. In the third week, however, daily offerings increased rapidly and sellers were obliged to make sharp reductions in prices in order to maintain disposals. Subsequent quotations ranged mainly from 1s. to 6s. per bushel, with

special to 8s., and only on a few occasions did sellers obtain 10s. to 12s. for best lines. Medium grade lots in particular were difficult to dispose of and considerable quantities, which retailers would not purchase, were cleared to stock food buyers.

Cabbages Cheaper at Closing.

Early in the period prices for cabbages showed some recovery and ranged from 5s. to 14s. per dozen according to size, with choice large heads 16s. to 18s. and occasionally 20s. These levels were fairly well maintained until the last few days of the month, when increasing supplies of cauliflowers and heavy stocks of beans had an adverse effect upon the retail demand for cabbages. At closing, most sales ranged from 3s. to 8s. per dozen with choice large 10s. to 12s.

Increased Supplies of Cauliflowers.

During the first half of the month, most of the cauliflowers on offer were of medium and inferior grade only and met a restricted retail inquiry at from 2s. to 14s. per dozen according to size and quality, with only isolated special to 26s. In the third week, however, a marked improvement was apparent, and, although a wide variation remained in evidence, demand for good and choice lines was fairly keen. Most sales ranged from 10s. to 24s. per dozen, with special to 30s. However, on occasions of temporary scarcity, as much as 36s. was obtained for best heads. A percentage of very small and inferior cauliflowers was on offer on most days at prices ranging from 2s. and some sales were made to factory buyers.

Lettuce Plentiful.

Offerings of lettuce in the producers' market were fairly heavy on most trading days and realisations in the main varied from 3s. to 6s. per case for medium to good packs, with special 7s. to 8s. At times, however, choice lines were more lightly supplied and 10s. and occasionally 12s. was obtained.

Coloured Tomatoes Realise Very High Prices Early.

Stocks of coloured tomatoes from near-metropolitan growing areas were particularly light during the first two weeks of the period and prices advanced sharply, being highest on Monday, 8th March, when as much as 46s. per half case was obtained for best packs. The high prices ruling, however, had an adverse effect on retail demand and even before any increase in supplies commenced, a rapid decline in values was apparent. By the third week, rates had returned to more moderate levels and ranged mainly from 6s. to 18s. per half case, according to size and condition. In the last few days of the month, realisations again eased, seldom exceeding 14s. per half case. Quotations for stocks from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and other inland districts showed a corresponding variation but were generally much lower than those for local offerings. Consignments from Queensland brought from 8s. to 14s. per half case early and occasional sales

to 20s., but in the latter half of the period a decline in quality was apparent and rates dropped to range mainly from 3s. to 8s. Moderate supplies also came to hand from the Portland district of Victoria.

Other Main Vegetable Lines.

Representative ranges of prices for other main lines of vegetables were as follow:—Carrots, 12s. to 24s., occasional sales to 32s., inferior lower; Parsnips 20s. to 28s., few to 32s.; Potatoes (No. 1 grade) 10s., fixed maximum price; Onions: New South Wales (brown and white) 10s. to 18s., few higher, Victorian (brown and white) 22s. to 23s. 6d.; Swedes 14s. to 18s., few special to 24s.; Pumpkins 5s. to 8s., early sales 10s. to 12s.; Sweet Potatoes (old season) 12s. to 20s., few higher, (new season) 22s. to 28s., few to 32s., per cwt.; Celery (local) 8s. to 18s., special to 24s., few to 33s., per dozen bunches, (South Australian) 30s. to 36s., few higher, per crate; Cucumbers (apple) 6s. to 10s., special to 16s., (green) 6s. to 10s., early sales to 14s. per half case.

T. M. McKEON.

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

March, 1948.

Tasmanian Potatoes in Heavy Supply.

Consignments from all sources during the month aggregated 234,357 bags compared with a total of 156,620 in February. Receipts at Alexandria, however, were exceptionally light, only 1,410 bags of No. 1 grade Factors arriving from local centres and 1,686 bags of Carmans and Snowflakes from Victoria. Shipments from Tasmania showed a considerable increase when 231,262 bags came to hand at Sussex-street. About 99,087 bags were available during February. Demand was good for all lines offered for trading. Supplies at times exceeded requirements, resulting in a portion of the consignments being stored.

Prices fixed for the week ending 31st March, Sydney basis, were: Wholesalers' Prices to Retailers, Local and Interstate, No. 1 grade and undergrades £10 per ton, plus cartage, which must not exceed 10s. per ton. Rates for New South Wales grown potatoes for delivery to country areas were as quoted, plus freight from loading station; prices for interstate potatoes to New South Wales country areas were as quoted, plus freight from Sydney or loading station, whichever was the lower. Primary merchants' prices to wholesalers were £1 per ton less than the figures quoted.

Swedes Again Scarce.

No supplies were available at Alexandria during the period but 961 bags from Tasmania were received at Sussex-street. Prices ranged from £10 to £12 per ton.