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T H E V E G E T A B L E S I T U A T I O N

Summary

The 1937 vegetable shipping season, according to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, is approaching its close with records of generally large production of most crops, with farm prices of many lines lower than those of the year before, and with prospects of a reduced acreage for the 1938 shipping season. Indications are for a somewhat smaller acreage of commercial early potatoes and many of the fall and winter truck crops.

Prices of potatoes are expected to remain fairly stable for the next few months, but prices of such storage crops as sweet potatoes, onions, and cabbage probably will show their usual seasonal advance between now and next spring. Most of the truck crops also may advance slightly in price, as the main sources of supply shift to the southern and southwestern producing areas. City market prices recently have been irregular; many commodities have shown a seasonal advance in price, while others have declined under increasing supplies particularly from the western truck-crop sections.

POTATOES

Prices have fluctuated, but much lower than last season

Potato prices in market centers fluctuated only slightly during the past month, although there was a steady decline in prices of Idaho Russet Burbanks, because of the record production in that State. At New York City prices of U.S. No. 1 potatoes, excluding Russet Burbanks, varied from 92 to 96 cents per 100 pounds, l.c.l., during the month, whereas at Chicago they varied from 91 cents to \$1.03 per 100 pounds, carlot basis. In both markets Russet Burbanks declined about 40 cents per 100 pounds in the same period. Potato prices in terminal markets recently have been 90 cents to \$1 per 100 pounds below the corresponding prices of last season, when production was relatively small.

In the third full week of October, prices generally rose 15 to 20 cents per 100 pounds in both eastern and mid-western markets, as shippers and growers delayed shipments, awaiting release of more information relative to the marketing agreements for certain States in the North Central and Western areas. The marketing and diversion programs effective October 19 are designed to increase returns to growers, and are expected to remove from regular commercial channels about 25,000,000 bushels of surplus potatoes, including culls and other low-quality stock, from this year's estimated production of 324,434,000 bushels in the 30 late-potato States.

Production 7 percent above average

The indicated production of potatoes for the country as a whole was reduced slightly as of October 1, when the total crop was estimated at 399,000,000 bushels. This is about 69,000,000 bushels (or 21 percent) more than was produced in 1936, and is about 27,000,000 bushels (or 7 percent) larger than the 1928-32 average crop.

Production in the 30 late States is now indicated to be approximately 324,000,000 bushels, or about 46,000,000 more than in 1936 and 24,000,000 bushels larger than the average crop. A total of 115,000,000 bushels is indicated for the 8 eastern late States, compared with 107,000,000 last year. In the 10 central late States, the crop is indicated to be about 120,000,000 bushels, against only 92,000,000 last season, and in the 12 western States there are about 90,000,000 bushels, compared with 80,000,000 a year ago. The crop in the East and the West is about 11,000,000 and 16,000,000 bushels, respectively, larger than average, while in the central States it is about 2,000,000 bushels smaller than the average production.

Apparently shipments have reached peak

During the week ended October 23, the 18 surplus producing late-potato States shipped by rail and boat approximately 4,500 cars, compared with 5,000 cars the preceding week and 4,900 cars during the third week of October last year. The total to date this season from these States is about 41,000 cars, against 42,300 to the same time last season. The principal shipping States recently have been Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, North Dakota, Colorado, California, and Michigan, in the order of importance. Maine and Idaho were supplying half the total weekly shipments, and the above-named 7 States about 80 percent of the total. Apparently the peak movement of the season has been reached.

SWEET POTATOES

Usual seasonal rise likely

Sweet potato prices declined seasonally during the past month and have about reached the low point for the year. It is probable that prices will rise during the next few months at about the usual seasonal rate. New York City, which is close to the important commercial shipping-area in the East, recently reported bushel baskets selling around 70 cents on the wholesale markets, while the price in Chicago was about \$1.13 per bushel. A year ago the corresponding prices were 84 cents and \$1.37 per bushel, respectively.

The production of sweetpotatoes as indicated on October 1 totals 75,058,000 bushels, or slightly more than was indicated a month earlier. The crop is about 11,000,000 bushels larger than that of 1936 and about 3,700,000 bushels above the 1928-32 average. Production this season is expected to be greater than that of last year in each of the major producing areas.

Shipments larger than year ago

Carlot shipments during the week ended October 23 totaled about 535 cars, a decrease of 35 from the preceding week's record, but about 165 cars more than moved during the corresponding week of last season. Total output by rail and boat this season to date is about 4,900 cars, compared with 4,725 a year ago. Virginia recently was shipping slightly more than 300 cars per week, Louisiana about 90 cars weekly, New Jersey 55, and Maryland 35 cars.

Potatoes: Shipping point and terminal market prices per 100-pound sack, specified weeks, 1936-37

Location and variety	Week ended -					
	1936		1937			
	Oct. 17:	Sept. 18:	Sept. 25:	Oct. 2:	Oct. 9:	Oct. 16
	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.
<u>F.o.b. shipping point:</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:
Benton Harbor, Mich.:	1.65	1/ .88	.83	.75	.75	.80
Waupaca, Wis.:	1.60	.75	.71	.72	.75	.75
Presque Isle, Maine:	1.45	-	.53	.49	.48	.56
San Luis Valley, Colo.:	1.70	-	.60	.73	.73	.78
Idaho Falls, Idaho:	1.55	-	-	.62	.61	.66
Rochester, New York:	1.61	-	-	-	1/.78	.78
	:	:	:	:	:	:
<u>Warehouse cash-to-grower:</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:
Waupaca, Wis.:	1.25	.54	.50	.48	.47	.50
Presque Isle, Maine:	1.21	-	.33	.31	.30	.35
Idaho Falls, Idaho:	1.25	-	-	.44	.42	.43
Rochester, New York:	1.25	-	-	-	1/.53	.57
	:	:	:	:	:	:
<u>TERMINAL MARKETS:-</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:
<u>New York City:</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:
Excluding Rus. Burbanks ...:	2.04	.92	.96	.93	.93	.96
Idaho Russet Burbanks:	2.88	2.20	2.11	2.05	1.92	1.85
<u>Chicago:</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:
Excluding Rus. Burbanks ...:	:	:	:	:	:	:
and Colo. McClures:	1.90	1.00	.91	.94	1.00	1.03
Idaho Russet Burbanks:	2.32	1.86	1.53	1.45	1.38	1.43
Colorado McClures:	2.28	-	1.20	1.32	1.35	1.36
	:	:	:	:	:	:

1/ Average for one day.

TRUCK CROPS

The 1937 shipping season for truck crops, now nearing its close, has been notable for the general increase of production of nearly all crops, onions being the most important exception. A slight increase in total acreage was accompanied by relatively high yields for most crops. In consequence, prices to growers have been generally lower than those of last year, and there are definite indications of reduced acreage for the 1938 shipping season.

Among the late crops for fall harvesting, production increases over last year's harvest are indicated for lima beans, snap beans, cauliflower, peppers, and spinach. The late crop of green peas in Arizona and the Imperial Valley of California also is expected to be larger than that of last year. Decreased production is indicated for late celery, cucumbers, and lettuce.

Late truck crops: Commercial acreage and production for market,
average 1928-32, and annual 1936 and 1937

Commodity and group	Acreage			Unit	Production		
	Average: 1928-32:	1936	Prelim.: 1937		Average: 1928-32	1936	Prelim. 1937
	Acres	Acres	Acres				
Beans, lima				: 1,000:			
Late (Va.) ..	1,580	800	800	: bush.:	107	46	48
Beans, snap				: "			
Late (2)	15,220	21,250	20,450	: "	1,455	1,654	1,923
Cauliflower				: 1,000:			
Late (L.I.) ..	3,540	4,200	4,400	: crates:	589	1,155	1,210
Celery				: "			
Late (2)	1,460	2,010	2,180	: "	443	623	590
Cucumbers				: 1,000:			
Late (2)	1,160	1,210	950	: bush.:	99	89	67
Lettuce				: 1,000:			
Late (2)	29,450	36,600	33,400	: crates:	4,011	4,389	3,667
Peppers				: 1,000:			
Late (Calif.):	850	2,100	2,100	: bush.:	243	494	546
Spinach				: "			
Late	4,870	9,550	9,950	: "	1,381	2,201	2,627

Fall and winter acreage reduced

The normal shipping season for vegetables is considered to begin during the preceding late autumn in the southern States. Thus the 1937 season began in the late fall of 1936 and continued through the year 1937. Similarly, the 1938 shipping season begins now in the South, and continues throughout 1938.

The indicated acreage of 11 truck crops for shipping during this fall and winter is 125,350 acres, compared with 133,250 last fall and winter and a 5-year average of 85,610 acres. This is a net decrease of 6 percent below last season's acreage, but a net increase of 46 percent over the 1928-32 average. Increases over last year are indicated for carrots, eggplant, and peppers, but

decreased acreage is indicated for artichokes; snap beans, fall and early cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, spinach, and tomatoes. Under normal growing conditions, this would indicate a great abundance of carrots, eggplant, and peppers for marketing during the next few months, but a smaller supply than last fall and winter of all the other truck crops. No scarcity is expected, however, as last season's acreage of most crops was very large. Plantings of winter vegetables (mostly tomatoes, green peppers, and lima beans) in Cuba also are reported to be smaller than those of last season.

Usually about two-thirds of the California asparagus is used for canning, and small quantities are used for this purpose in other States. The total indicated acreage to be cut for all purposes (market and manufacture) in 14 commercial producing States next year is 113,670 acres, an increase of 4 percent over last spring and 15 percent above the 1928-32 average. Nearly two-thirds of this total is in California. Among the early States, decreases in Georgia and South Carolina are more than offset by a 6-percent increase in California. It is expected, therefore - with favorable weather conditions - that asparagus will be quite plentiful next spring and summer.

Fall and winter truck crops for market: 1938 acreage indications, with comparisons

Commodity and States	Average: 1928-32	1937	Indic.: 1938	Commodity and States	Average: 1928-32	1937	Indic.: 1938
ARTICHOKES:	Acres	Acres	Acres	CUCUMBERS:	Acres	Acres	Acres
Calif.:	7,770	10,100	9,700	Fla.:	1,390	1,600	1,500
BEANS, Snap:				EGGPLANT:			
Fla. & Tex.:	12,000	21,100	19,000	Fla.:	750	850	1,000
CABBAGE:				PEPPERS:			
S.C. & Va. .:	810	2,800	2,100	Fla. & Tex. .:	2,010	3,600	4,500
Calif., Fla.:				SPINACH:			
La. & Tex.:	37,560	56,200	51,300	Virginia:	2,940	3,000	2,850
CARROTS:				TOMATOES:			
Calif.:	3,280	10,850	11,300	Fla.:	1,930	4,500	4,300
CAULIFLOWER:				Total of these:			
Ariz., Calif.:				11 crops	85,610	133,250	125,350
& Oregon .:	7,990	8,350	8,100	ASPARAGUS:			
CELERY:				total, canning:			
Calif.:	7,180	10,300	9,700	and for market	99,080	109,320	113,670

City market prices irregular

The southern and western winter vegetables which are expected to be in abundant supply should sell at fairly moderate prices during the next few months, but the tendency is for northern stored vegetables, such as onions and cabbage, to advance slightly in price, at least until competition begins from the early southern supply.

During the past month, general price declines have been observed for broccoli, carrots, lettuce, spinach, and sweet potatoes, while considerable advances were recorded for snap beans, cauliflower, cucumbers, eggplant, eastern and midwestern onions, and green peas. On the New York City wholesale market, 8 vegetables on which prices are available were recently selling higher than a month earlier, and 11 were selling lower. Compared with the price level of mid-October 1936, advances were registered for 12 products, and declines for 5. On the Chicago wholesale market, just about as many vegetables were selling higher than a month earlier as were selling lower. Compared with a year ago, Chicago prices were higher on 7 and lower on 10 vegetables.

Truck crops: Wholesale prices at New York, averages for specified weeks, 1936-37

Commodity	Unit	Week ended					
		1936		1937			
		Oct. 17	Sept. 18	Sept. 25	Oct. 2	Oct. 9	Oct. 16
		Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.
Beans, lima	Bushel	1.42	2.40	2.67	3.04	2.60	2.35
Beans, snap, green ..	"	.98	1.65	1.38	1.19	1.62	1.85
Beets	"	.40	.50	.50	.42	.39	.40
Broccoli, western ..	Crate	2.35	3.38	3.42	3.22	2.75	2.71
" eastern ..	"	1.15	1.52	1.56	1.52	1.33	1.45
Carrots, western ..	Letc. crate	3.18	3.54	3.56	2.69	2.42	2.75
" eastern ..	Bushel	.72	.62	.63	.58	.58	.60
Cabbage, domestic ..	50 pounds	.60	.65	.62	.67	.60	.62
Cauliflower	Crate	1.04	2.15	2.27	2.33	2.27	2.72
Celery	2/3 crate	1.36	1.36	1.42	1.71	1.67	2.15
Cucumbers, La. & Ga. ..	Bushel	1.95	---	---	3.75	3.50	3.12
" eastern ..	"	1.59	1.27	1.89	2.75	3.12	2.88
Eggplant	"	.48	.75	.75	1.35	1.38	1.38
Lettuce, Iceberg ..	4-5 dz. crt.	3.22	4.02	2.77	2.54	2.65	2.85
Onions, yellows ...	50-lb. sk.	.58	.92	.97	1.02	.97	1.04
" Valencias ..	" "	1.10	1.31	1.32	1.23	1.19	1.27
Peas, green	Bushel	2.96	2.30	2.46	2.64	2.56	2.99
Peppers	"	.48	.59	.58	.50	.43	.42
Spinach	"	.52	1.57	1.47	.99	.61	.64
Sweetpotatoes	"	.84	.94	.78	.68	.70	.70
Tomatoes, Calif. ...	Lug box	1.61	1/ 1.56	2.00	1.69	1.36	1.50
Turnips	Bushel	.44	.48	.74	.62	.59	.54

Truck crops: Wholesale prices at Chicago, averages for specified weeks, 1936-37

Commodity	Unit	Week ended					
		1936		1937			
		Oct. 17	Sept. 18	Sept. 25	Oct. 2	Oct. 9	Oct. 16
		Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.
Beans, snap, green ..	Bushel	2.12	1.40	1.76	1.90	1.71	1.92
Beets	"	.38	.22	.24	.28	.28	.26
Broccoli	Pony crate	2.84	2.78	3.18	2.60	2.32	2.28
Cabbage, domestic ..	100 pounds	1.25	.98	1.03	1.16	1.05	1.09
Carrots, western ..	Letc. crate	2.56	2.76	2.88	2.65	2.12	2.38
" central ..	Bushel	.64	.60	.50	.46	.48	.45
Cauliflower, western:	Pony crate	1.42	1.41	1.53	1.72	1.76	1.77
" central:	Crate	1.33	1.00	1.12	1.58	1.80	1.90
Celery	1/2 crate	.82	1.34	1.00	.98	.92	1.08
Cucumbers, La.	Bushel	1.38	---	---	3.58	3.30	2.44
Eggplant	"	.32	.50	.82	1.06	1.18	1.28
Lettuce, Iceberg ...	4-5 dz. crt.	2.86	3.50	2.52	2.26	2.22	2.42
Onions, yellows ...	50-lb. sk.	.40	.68	.70	.74	.76	.78
Peas, green	Bushel	2.62	2.38	2.53	2.64	2.50	2.74
Peppers, Calif. ...	1 1/2 bushel	---	---	---	1.56	1.60	1.66
" central ..	Bushel	.49	.56	.54	.61	.51	.62
Spinach, Wash.	20-lb. crt.	1.36	---	1.62	1.44	1.09	1.18
" central ..	Bushel	.78	.88	1.18	.72	.62	.58
Sweetpotatoes	"	1.37	1.37	1.27	1.10	1.10	1.13
Tomatoes, Calif. ...	Lug box	1.54	---	---	1.80	1.18	1.44
Turnips	Bushel	.96	1.25	1.00	.90	.78	.68

1/ Average for one day.