

TRUCK CROPS

Commercial Truck Crops Will Be Greatly Expanded Next Season

EXPANDED acreage in commercial truck crops for fresh-market shipments in 1935 will likely offset increased demand and improved buying power, so that prices will show only a slight advance next season. This situation is forecast by the bureau of agricultural economics in its annual outlook report, covering the country as a whole.

Because of the higher prices received for a large number of important truck crops this year and the steady upward trend in consumption of vegetables in general, it is probable that the total acreage grown for fresh market shipment next season will exceed that of 1934. These are likely to be increases in the acreage of asparagus, snap beans, beets, tomatoes, cabbage, carrots, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, onions, peppers, spinach and watermelons, all of which were sold this year at prices higher than 1934.

Staples Still Short

Continued small supply of such staple foods as meats, eggs, and wheat is in prospect and is a favorable factor in the competitive position of fresh vegetables.

This is particularly true of early spring vegetables marketed during the first half of 1935. The commercial supply of late cabbage, onions, potatoes and sweet potatoes is relatively large, however, and the carryover of the stored portions of these crops into the winter marketing season is expected to offer considerable competition with the early spring crop.

In addition, the pack of nearly all varieties of commercially raised vegetable was unusually large in 1934 and a heavy supply is expected to be available for the winter and spring marketing period.

Winter Vegetables Increase

Reports received to date from Florida, Texas, Arizona, California and a few other early sections indicate that the combined acreage of 11 vegetables for harvest in the late fall and winter will be about 60 per cent larger than last season, and 51 per cent above the average for 1929-33. This sharp increase indicates that rapid expansion in production

of vegetables for the winter market is continuing.

In 1934 a considerable portion of the early snap bean, cabbage and other early vegetable acreage was wiped out by frost. The 1935-36 acreage in these crops therefore was considerably in excess of those remaining for harvest a year previously after the frosts.

Prices Are Increased

Prices of fresh-market vegetables increased about 10 per cent this year over last, and were the highest received since 1926. Prices received by producers for the 17 vegetables combined are indicated to be 75 per cent in 1935, in terms of the 1924-25 average.

The average value per acre of vegetables in 1935 was probably 15 per cent higher than in 1934, and 35 per cent above the record low mark in 1933. Early indications are that the 1935 return will be about \$190 per acre.

Oppose Trade Agreement

The reciprocal trade agreement signed with Cuba in 1934 which allowed reductions on certain Cuban vegetables during the winter, when competition with American grown truck crops is at a low ebb, has proved of distinct advantage to the Cuban growers, and accounts for the fact that Cuba now exports larger amounts of winter vegetables to the United States than ever before.

The Cuban trade agreement has been the subject of much bitter opposition on the part of vegetable growers in Florida, Texas, and other states which grow winter vegetables.

In addition to these imports, turnips, rutabagas and potatoes came from Canada; dried onions were brought in from Chile, Italy, Spain, Greece, Egypt and Canada. Garlic came in from Chile, Italy, Mexico and Spain.

Lower Contract Prices On Canning Truck Crops Seen

Judging from the usual effect of wholesale prices of canned vegetables upon the acreage of commercial canning vegetables the following season, it appears that canners will contract smaller acreages in 1935, and that contract prices to growers may be somewhat lower than the 1934 prices.

With 85 to 90 per cent of the total acreage of commercial canning vegetables ordinarily grown on contract, total acreage for these crops will be smaller next season than the record high in 1934.

Large supplies of the important canned vegetables are available for the 1935-36 trade, and large carryover stocks are in prospect at the end of this season.

Current wholesale prices of canned vegetables are materially below those of the last two seasons and are but little higher than the low price level of 1929-33.

Increased Production May Offset Increase in Demand

While increased demand for farm products in 1935, forecast by the bureau of agricultural economics at ten per cent, will have a tendency to raise prices for farm commodities produced next year, effect of improvement in demand upon prices may be offset by increased production, the bureau points out.

Sharp advance in prices from an average of 65 per cent of the pre-war level in 1932 to about 137 per cent in 1934 is due not only to improvement in demand, but also to reduction in supplies and to a rising general price level.

Volume of agricultural production declined about 15 per cent between 1931 and 1934. The high level of production prior to 1932, together with reduced demand, resulted in an accumulation of stocks. Reduction of important commodity stocks, with the exception of cotton, to about normal levels, is a strengthening factor.

With a normal crop-growing season however, total production in 1935 is likely to be larger than in 1934, and with a favorable season the supply might be large enough to prevent a further increase in farm commodity prices.

In the past year prices of several farm commodities have been influenced by supplies that were at times below domestic requirements. Production plans for 1935 contemplate an increased output. Although increased demand will tend to raise prices on farm commodities which have remained on a world basis, shifting of some commodities from a domestic market to a world market basis through increased production, may result in lower prices in spite of increase in demand.

Winter Peas As Cover Crop

Winter peas are being used quite extensively this year as cover crops in orchards. T. A. Hayward of Montgomery county, N. C., reports 2,000 bushels of Austrian winter peas for planting as a cover crop in his peach orchard. They were used in alternate rows with wheat. This crop has the added advantage in that it can be turned under earlier in the spring than most cover crops.

Long Season For Bean Crop Gives Carolina Advantage

The Carolinas have had one of the longest seasons in years in which to market their fall bean crop. Killing frosts held off until well into November and shipments continued until the middle of the month. Ordinarily the Carolinas finish their season by November 1.

Aide from early in the fall when there was a strong market for a few days with prices going as high as 80 per bushel, the prices have been only fair. Probably the bulk of the fall stock has sold at \$1 to \$2 per bushel.

Florida shipments started at about the usual time and after the first of November offered their usual strong competition to the other producing sections.

It is too early yet to figure on spring prospects as they will depend largely on how large the Florida spring crop proves to be. Generally speaking, the Carolinas suffer if Florida shipments last too late into the spring.

Growers Are Warned Not To Increase Cabbage Plantings

Reduced supplies of cabbage this year, coupled with an improved demand, resulted in higher prices to growers than were received for the large 1934 crop.

These higher prices are likely to cause growers to increase their plantings in 1935. Already reports on the fall and early spring plantings indicate material increases that these growers will repeat the experience of 1934, and produce more cabbage than the market can absorb, unless there is a curtailment of acreage.

In the light of past experience it appears probable that only moderate increases in acreage would result in about as large a cabbage crop as could be marketed at prices in line with the average of recent years.

In the early states—Florida, Louisiana, Texas and California, it is probable that cabbage acreage for 1935 spring markets will be largely increased over 1934. Under normal conditions an acreage about one-third greater than the 24,000 acres harvested this year would produce an early cabbage crop as large as can be marketed at reasonably profitable figures.

In the second-early states—South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and eastern Virginia—the prospects are for a substantial increase. With the expected increase in the early states, only a moderate increase in acreage would be justified by probable market conditions at the time of harvesting. Prices this year averaged \$34.80 per ton.

Nash County Grower Breaks Per Acre Corn Yield Record

All corn yields for Nash County have just been broken by C. E. Deane, of near Spring Hope, who harvested 115 bushels of corn from a single acre.

Carefully kept figures by Mr. Deane and T. H. Deane, member of commercial agriculture at Spring Hope, show a cost account of \$18.90 for labor, figuring 115 man hours and 97

Lower Prices On Tomatoes Induce Cut In Acreage

Record Crop In Middle Areas Forces Price Down To Low Of 54 Cents.

Comparatively low prices received for the record large crop of tomatoes this season (\$1.12 per bushel to growers) will undoubtedly tend toward a reduction in acreage; just as the relatively high prices for tomatoes in 1934 caused an increased acreage in 1935 to a record high level of 175,270 acres.

Low prices received for the fall crop of tomatoes in Florida and Texas in 1934 will result in a decreased acreage this fall. On the other hand, high prices received for south Florida's spring crop may result in some increases in acreage in that territory.

Growers of tomatoes in the second-early states—South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi—received higher prices in 1935 than in 1934, which probably will cause a slight increase in these states for the coming season. While average prices for the country as a whole were \$1.12 per bushel, this area netted \$1.24 per bushel average, compared with only 81 cents from the large crop of 1934, and \$1.45 for the recent 5-year period.

The Intermediate States

Intermediate tomato states—North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, southern Illinois, Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri, and parts of California—reported very low prices for tomatoes this year, so that it is probable they will curtail 1935 acreages very materially. A record crop of 6,971,000 bushels was produced in these states this year and prices to growers dropped to the extremely low level of 54 cents per bushel.

Advice from Cuba indicates that plantings have been made earlier this year and will be slightly larger than in 1934. Exports, however, are not expected to be any larger than in 1934-35, due to strict grading regulations that have been established. The tomato season on the west coast of Mexico is later than that of Cuba, and so far no reports of planting intentions have been received.

There is evidence that growers in both countries made profits on the 1934-35 crops, so that it seems likely that ample supplies of tomatoes will be available in both countries for export to the United States, if prices are attractive.

Cabbage Possibilities Are Good—Storage Stock Light

Cabbage production in the late states proved to be much lighter than a year ago and the holdings in storage are correspondingly light. It should preface an early cleanup of the old crop which last year persisted until late March.

New York and Wisconsin supply practically all of the late stock and both states had lighter crops this season. The Wisconsin crop is only 50 per cent of last season while New York has about 75 per cent as much cabbage. The reduction in the two states combined will amount to several thousand cars, which is an amount sufficient to help the early states materially.

South Carolina had a very successful season last year and increased its acreage slightly. About 1,500 acres will be grown compared with 1,300 last year.

Florida Acreage

Florida is putting out a larger cabbage acreage this season but is late in starting. The crop is estimated at 8,600 acres against 6,800 last year. Two years ago Florida produced 10,700 acres of cabbage.

The big factor in early cabbage, however, is Texas. Last year a succession of frosts ruined more than half the acreage and only 12,000 acres were harvested. This season 39,000 acres will be planted but it remains to be seen whether this acreage will come through without damage. In only one past season has such a large acreage come through successfully. That was in the winter of 1933-34.

Prices of cabbage are now at higher levels than they were this season and dealers have been buying up as much as possible in New York State, indicating that they think well of the possibilities of cabbage for the coming season.

SPACING SWEET POTATOES

Two inches difference in spacing sweet potato plants gave J. H. Carter of Union county, N. C., an increase of 10 bushels of marketable sweets to the acre this year, says assistant county agent D. C. Bankin. The best yield was obtained where the plants were spaced 13 inches apart, with an average of 300 bushels to the acre.

Home hours of work at ten cents an hour; fertilizer, \$16.85; seed cost 40 cents, and rent for land, \$4.

This gives a total cost of \$40.15, or a cost of 39.5 cents per bushel, and leaves a net profit per acre of \$74.84. The corn is valued at \$1 a bushel.

The corn was planted eight inches apart in three and one-half feet rows. Nitrate of soda was applied liberally.

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Outlet For Peanut Crop

Production of selling will add some due to the unusually reduced lint market. The increasing amount of cottonseed and other by-products, relatively small crops in 1934, will greatly stimulate demand for peanut oil, and will be instrumental in having the general crop from low-price market become the means of agricultural education.

The October estimate (first shipment) indicates a peanut crop of 1,347,000,000 pounds, the highest on record. Conditions of peanuts in all sections will continue heavy, and there is promise for further stock peanuts in growing areas the heavy crop. Conditions all during the 1934-35 season are expected to be the heaviest in a decade, and an export of peanuts to Europe and Canada will probably not be discontinued.

Conditions Are Getting

Although the relatively favorable price which growers are receiving for the 1934 crop would normally result in increased plantings in 1935, the 1934 peanut contract entered into by the AAA provides that growers may be required to reduce their plantings from the base acreage. The marketing situation in the 1935-36 season will depend considerably on demand for peanuts for crushing, and this outlet problem is expected to be important.

South Carolina, which produces mainly the large-seeded or Virginia-type peanuts, has an average about 5 per cent larger than last year. The carryover of this type in all hands into the 1935-36 season will be small. With increased plantings and further improvement in economic demand, supplies of Virginia to human and animal are not expected to be reduced.

North Carolina, which belongs to the group of states producing both Spanish and runner-type peanuts, will be a part of the section producing crops of second proportions. Acreage was increased in these states by about 20 per cent over 1934, but because of better yields the total crop will exceed 1934 by about 15 per cent. Supplies of old-crop peanuts at the beginning of the 1935-36 season were ample, so was the case this season. Present indications are that a substantial part of this crop, especially of the runner type, will be crushed for oil.

Sweet Potato Crop Same As Last Year

The sweet potato crop this year for the country as a whole is practically the same as last season. The total production, as estimated by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, is 99,198,000 bushels compared with 97,400,000 bushels last year.

North Carolina has the largest production of any single state, or 8,250,000 bushels against 8,065,000 last year. This year with another North Carolina production approximately one-eighth of the sweet potatoes grown in the entire country. South Carolina has a moderate crop, or 4,400,000 bushels compared with 4,438,000 last year.

Most of the Carolina sweeties are consumed within the state as the shipments to outside markets are light in comparison with some of the other states. Virginia, for example, produces less sweet potatoes than South Carolina but provides nearly one-fourth of the country's entire shipments.

Conditions of sweet potatoes this season have been slightly heavier than last year and the demand has averaged slightly better although prices have remained rather low. In late November the price in most of the large markets was 70 to 81 per bushel. Apparently the higher prices for white potatoes has helped the demand for sweet potatoes as well but it may go so later in the season.

Watermelon Prices Will Stimulate An Increased Acreage

Watermelon prices this past season, while slightly lower than in 1934, were probably high enough to encourage further acreage, expansion next year. This is particularly true in the Imperial Valley, the second-early and the late states.

In the light of past experience, 1935 acreage is likely to be expanded to a point where prices will decline sufficiently to make the crop unprofitable to the producer, unless marketing agreements preclude it by forestalling sales.

Plantings in the second-early states, which include North and South Carolina totaled 124,000 acres, which was 17 per cent above 1934. Rainy weather prevented the shipment of several hundred acres of Carolina melons, although total production in the second-early states was 35,970,000 melons, or 28 per cent larger than in 1934. Prices to growers averaged 84¢ per 1,000 melons, or about 2 per cent less than in 1934.

General price declines might have been greater this year had it not been for the marketing agreements in operation in Florida, Georgia and North and South Carolina, where shipments were restricted to U. S. No. 1 grade during most of the marketing season, and where a few shipping holidays were put into effect.

LIKE SOYBEAN ADOPTANTS

Approximately 1,200,000 bushels to N. Carolina potato growers under the AAA (the federal adjustment) plan, and which is sufficient to take care of included plantings, are authorized to be produced, George E. Prince, chief of the U. S. division of statistics of the department of agriculture, says. The program applies only to potatoes grown for man. Applications for an acreage through county agents, Mr. Prince advised.