

ISSUE A SPECIAL POTATO CROP REPORT

AN INCREASE IN NORTH AND
CENTRAL NORTH

Commercial Shipping Surplus of Late
Potatoes Now Estimated at
129,466 Cars

Washington, D. C., Oct. 17.—The Bureau of Crop Estimates has issued a quantitative report and comments on the late or winter commercial potato crop of the United States based on conditions October 1. This report deals with that portion of the crop loaded in cars, or the surplus or highly commercial crop.

The states included by the report are those producing late potatoes in considerable commercial quantities for other than local market. Carload movement of late potatoes from these states this year is now estimated at 129,466 cars, or approximately 90,626,200 bushels, as compared with 152,248 cars or 106,573,600 bushels last year, or 85 per cent of last year's commercial crop. Indications are that the commercial

crop is about 9 to 10 per cent less than the average. The crop has shown some improvement throughout the east and middle west during September. Maine, New York and Pennsylvania now indicate a production of 42,630 cars or 1,812 cars increase over the September 1 estimate, and 892 cars less than last year.

Conditions in the northwest have improved to some extent during the month. Oregon, Idaho and Washington promise to ship 11,723 cars or 223 cars more than on September 1, as compared with 13,205 cars last year, or 89 per cent of last year's crop. California, Utah and Nevada have shown little change since last month and now promise to ship 6,185 cars as compared with 7,365 last year.

Eastern States

Maine now promises a commercial potato crop that will be loaded in cars for outside shipment, or 25,750 cars, an increase of 1,282 cars over the September 1 estimate, but 1,172 cars less than last year. Some rot has appeared, but is not regarded as serious yet. Quality is excellent.

New York.—Most of the important potato sections escaped frost until September 27, when about a third of the state was frosted. Late plantings have had an opportunity to continue growth and in consequence they will yield more than was expected a month ago. Except on Long Island, late blight caused very little damage before September 1, but since that time it has spread over nearly all parts of the state, except north of the Adirondacks, and has caused more or less rot in practically every field. As a result of these changes the total movement from this state is now estimated at 9,900 cars. As a result of the losses occasioned by shipping immature and partly diseased potatoes the price in some shipping sections is unsettled at the present time.

Pennsylvania.—The condition of the commercial potato crop in Pennsylvania is 79 per cent normal, which is the same as a month ago. Harvest is about half completed with fairly good yields; there has been very little blight; some rot is reported in the northern counties.

Central States

Michigan.—The first half of September passed without any good rains except over small localities. During the latter half of the month rains have been quite general over the state, and the prospect has improved considerably. In some of the northern interior districts frost has damaged the vines, but over much of the state until October 1 there had been no damaging frost and the tubers were still growing. Many report that the number in the hill is small but that they are attaining good size, and that the quality is good. In other sections they are running small in size but numerous in the hill. There has been much tip-burn, but so far as known, late blight has not appeared in any part of the state. In

the central and southern districts the vines are dying and the crop is maturing. Very little digging has been done yet and the harvesting of the crop will undoubtedly be later than usual. The price is not well established as practically no shipping of the late crop is being done yet. It varies considerably, being highest in the southwestern district and least in the northern districts, which are much farther from markets.

Minnesota.—Due to rains and good growing weather and lack of frost, the commercial potato crop shows a slight improvement over one month ago. While blight developed somewhat on the late crop, the favorable weather will more than offset this damage. Last month the estimated carlot movement was 24,000 cars while on October 1 the carlot movement is estimated at 24,500 as compared with 26,000 in 1918. The carlot movement in the eastern district or early potato belt will be lighter than last year and in the south and southwestern portion of the state, where about 600 cars moved last year, there will be a considerable decrease. The western and central districts will not show much change from last year if cars can be secured, especially in the western and Red river valley district.

Wisconsin.—The commercial potato crop of Wisconsin shows a slight increase in quantity compared with a month ago. The forecasted production for the commercial potato carlot movement, based on October 1 conditions, is 21,300 cars, compared with a forecast on September 1 of 20,750 cars and with 25,510 cars shipped last year and 31,300 cars in a year of full normal production. The present condition of the crop indicates a prospect of 71 per cent of a normal yield per acre, or approximately 97 bushels per acre, compared with 69 per cent a month ago; 81 per cent on October 1 last year and a ten-year average of 76 per cent. Harvesting is well under way in northern districts and just beginning in the southern districts. For the state as a whole 73 per cent of the crop still remains to be harvested.

North Dakota.—The condition of commercial potatoes October 1 is 60 per cent compared with 62 per cent last month and 90 per cent a year ago. An unfavorable dry and hot season combined with unusually severe bug and hopped damage is the cause of this low condition. The heavier producing counties in the Red river district suffered less severely and yields range from a half crop in southern to about an average crop in northern counties of this district, but with the exception of a few northwestern counties yields in the remainder of the state are extremely poor. Potatoes are practically a failure in southwest but acreage is light. Quality favorable as a rule. It is estimated that the commercial shipments of potatoes from North Dakota this season will be 2,335 cars compared with 2,950 cars last season.

Nebraska.—The condition of the Nebraska commercial potato crop is about the same as a month ago. Some reporters called attention to a slight improvement in the latest potatoes due to September rain. Harvest began about September 20 and the preliminary reports on yield will warrant a slightly higher condition than the above figure. There is a very wide variation in yield. Dry land potatoes may average 45 bushels and irrigated potatoes 150 bushels per acre. Correspondents estimate that 66 per cent of the crop will be shipped out compared with 50 per cent a month ago. On this basis the shipments should total 2,574 cars of 700 bushels each or 600 cars more than estimated in September, as compared with 5,000 cars last year. Harvesting will be complete about October 20.

Iowa indicates 45 per cent of a crop or 513 cars as compared with 950 last year. Mitchell county is practically the only county reporting potatoes to be shipped out this year. Too much rain during the early growing season, followed by very extreme heat and exceptionally dry weather at blossoming time and leaf-hoppers have combined to materially reduce the yield this year. In many localities throughout the entire portion of the state the agricultural crop might well be considered an entire failure.

Western States

The Colorado potato crop continues to decline. The Greeley district has many fields not worth digging and the crop will fall several thousand cars short of the 5,740 car crop of 1918 and 6,580 car crop of 1917. The potato crop in the un-irrigated portion of Colorado is an entire failure. All other sections of the state show a decrease from the crop of last year, with the exception of the San Luis valley where the crop will run over 4,000 cars.

Washington.—Many counties report only enough potatoes for home consumption, and others, that imports will be necessary. Drought and heat throughout July and August were very severe on non-irrigated crop. Late summer and fall rains induced second growth, reducing the percentage of marketable tubers. Stands are uneven in all parts of the state and the number of tubers per hill is below normal. The crop for the state is now estimated at 2,800 cars as compared with 2,960 last month and 3,130 in 1918. Reports October 1 indicate an average yield per acre of 134 bushels, compared with 172 bushels last year, and a normal yield of 181 bushels.

Idaho.—Crop is moving out more rapidly than last year. Up to September 30, 1,355 cars had rolled, compared with 1,426 last year, according to the Bureau of Markets. Yields are below normal due to poor, uneven stands. Contributing factors were a dry spring, extreme drought and heat throughout July and August and reduction in supply of irrigation water. Irregular moisture supply tended to reduce per cent of

marketable tubers. October 1 condition indicates an average yield of the commercial acreage of 172 bushels per acre compared with 240 bushels last year. The crop for the state is now estimated at 6,830 cars or 190 cars more than last month and compared with 7,725 cars last year.

The Idaho Falls district improved somewhat over last month. Prospective yield per acre is now 165 bushels compared with 240 bushels last year, which was about a normal yield. In the Blackfoot-Shelly district improvement over last month is noted. A prospective average yield per acre of 172 bushels compared with 232 bushels last year, which was 12 bushels better than the normal for this district. In the Twin Falls district conditions remained stationary. The October 1 condition indicates an average yield of 324 bushels per acre compared with 306 bushels last year and a normal yield of 305 bushels.

Montana.—The Montana commercial potato crop has shown an increase of about two points in condition over September 1 estimate, due to favorable maturing weather. Digging in Bitter Root valley reveals only fair yield and not up to earlier expectations. Yields are low in all other districts and shipments will be light. Lack of irrigation water and excessive heat accounts for the light crop over the state.

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