

Observations outlined to up potato profits

Additional profits are possible from the annual potato production in Prince Edward Island, Len Limpert, food products officer for the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, said in his speech to the annual meeting of the Prince Edward Island Federal - Provincial Agricultural Council here this year.

Mr. Limpert's observations were as follows: The trend today is towards central plant grading, packing and prepackaging in the handling of potatoes. Plant operators know what constitutes a modern potato packing plant. They should recognize the improvements to product that can be achieved through this means of operation as compared to the past when each individual grower performed his own grading and packing, which resulted in a multiple variation of grades, sizes, etc. A modern plant must be flexible in its operation, design, and capacity, depending on its location and type of potato operation.

While the type of building and storage facilities will vary ex-

remely from plant to plant throughout Canada, the mechanical means of handling, washing, sizing, grading and packing should be fairly uniform. To be considered modern, the average plant should have the following facilities:

(1) Ample acreage for future expansion with a building of adequate floor space for proper grading and handling of the product, and with available truck and rail facilities.

(2) The plant should be able to receive and, if necessary, store potatoes as delivered to it from various types of farm vehicles, such as flat trucks with sacks, tote boxes, bulk and dump trucks, as well as rail shipments. Receiving and unloading capacity should be of an adequate volume to eliminate long delays in unloading the product.

(3) Having received the potatoes, every precaution must be exercised to insure that only a minimum of damage as a result of bruising from rough handling may occur. Potatoes should be moved on conveyors which are padded and, in traveling throughout the plant, the tubers should at all times be cushioned on rubber for their protection.

(4) Washing and sizing equipment should consist of the following: (a) A pre-sizer to eliminate undersized tubers; (b) A brush washer which can be used either to dry brush or to wash in accordance with consumer preference; (c) Sizing equipment, preferably of an expanding type, which can provide, if necessary, several variations of sizes, this which should reduce tuber damage as compared with the older type method of chain sizing.

(5) Grading tables should be brightly lighted and constructed so that the potatoes are moving on rubber belting or by means of revolving rolls; both of these types have their own advantages and disadvantages. Ample grading space and take-away channels should be provided to avoid undergrades from getting into the regular pack during peak periods. All tables, etc., should be elevated well above the floor level to provide for proper washing and cleaning of equipment and floor.

(6) Packing equipment. The sacking positions or jiggers at the end of the grading must be equipped with automatic shakers to avoid bruising common to filling sacks to their required weights. Further, the sacks

should rest on rubber padding at time of sewing. The finished product should be taken from the grading area by means of continuous belt line rather than being dropped on concrete floors.

(7) Pre-packing. Pre-packing equipment should be supplied by a solenoid-controlled elevator to insure a constant supply. Here again, care must be taken to eliminate bruising caused by falling tubers and rough handling. The consumer unit should always be shipped in some type of master container.

(8) Warehouse handling. The use of pallets in warehouse handling for all sizes of containers will greatly reduce damage to the product as results when the sacks are being continuously moved from one place to another by means of hand trucks. Shipping by pallets further reduces bruising and warehouse handling greatly reduces costs in handling and increases plant efficiency.

Following are some of the advantages of modern plant packing: (1) Reduced labour costs, (2) Standardization of grade and pack, (3) Availability of potatoes sized to consumer requirements, (4) Reduced costs of the containers through volume buying, (5) Continuity of supply due to the tonnage handled in the central plant, (6) Purchaser confidence in product as to grade, quality, size



and delivery, (7) Reduced damage to potatoes before, during and after grading, (8) All products are packed under a standard brand in clean, bright new containers which are an asset in marketing, (9) The product being centrally packed provides an opportunity for central selling and collective advertising. In 1963, Prince Edward Is-

land produced a total of 8,300,000 cwt. of potatoes valued at \$8,033,000 or an average price of \$1.04 per cwt. Of the total production 3,563,000 cwt. was Foundation and Certified Seed Stock and 4,737,000 cwt. was table stock. Six per cent or 284,230 cwt. of the table stock went to foreign

exports, thus leaving 4,452,700 for the domestic market.

MAIL FOR POWs
WASHINGTON (AP) — The American Red Cross has received word that leaders of the Viet Cong have agreed to deliver mail to American service-

men held prisoner in South Viet Nam, it was learned Friday. There is no direct U.S.-Viet Cong link on this matter, it is being handled with the International Red Cross and neutralist Cambodia's Red Cross acting as intermediaries.

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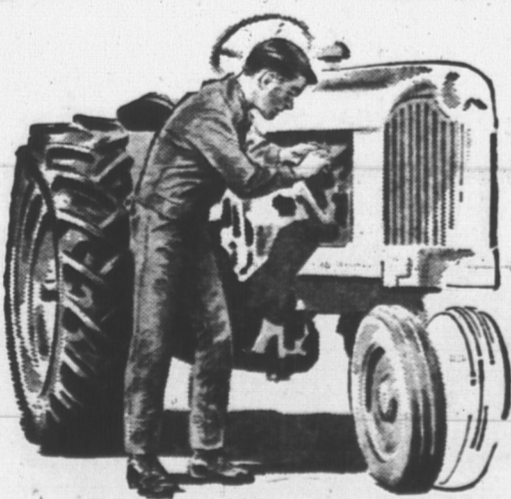
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CHAMPION ALL THE WAY

Linwood Ulassie Duchess won the reserve female junior championship at the Atlantic Winter Fair last year for Sterling Wood and Son, Mt. Herbert. Robert Wood is at the halter. Ulassie topped her class as a junior yearling heifer, on her way to the reserve championship.

Low quality hay can be improved

If you must feed poor quality hay, it may pay to have it ground and pelleted.

This is the conclusion of Dr. J. W. C. Nicholson from a study of several sheep feeding experiments conducted at CDA's Experimental Farm, Nappan, Nova Scotia.

Hay pellets are gaining in popularity for several reasons: — It is easy to mechanize their handling. — They require less storage space.

— They are cheaper to transport. — And they reduce waste at feeding.

Cattle and sheep will usually eat more hay when it is pelleted than in the baled form. This is particularly true when the hay is of low quality.

Offsetting these advantages is the cost of grinding and pelleting the forage. The results of the Nappan research help to show when pelleting is economical. Uses of grain, rolled barley and chopped hay were also investigated.

Poor Hay Tested— A mixed legume-grass hay that had been badly weathered during field curing was fed to lambs in pelleted form along with a limited amount of long hay.

They consumed a total of 270 lb. in 75 days — double the 137 lb. consumed by lambs which were fed the same hay in baled form.

The latter did not quite maintain their initial weight but those on pellets gained a quarter of a pound per day.

The poor quality hay was valued at \$15 per ton by Dr. Nicholson, and grinding and pelleting cost \$8 per ton. The cost of the feed consumed was \$3.02 per lamb on pellets and \$1.03 per lamb on long hay.

The 19 lb. of weight gained by each lamb fed pelleted hay has a feed cost of about \$2 or 10 cents per pound of gain.

Less Hay Tested— Results were quite similar in another experiment using late cut grass hay, field-cured in good weather. Lambs fed this long hay consumed an average of 119 lb. over an 84-day period while those fed the same hay in pellets consumed 239 lb. The former tried to maintain body weight while those on pellets gained one-tenth of a pound per day. It is difficult to calculate a feed cost for this gain because the lambs fed long hay lost weight. However, pelleting resulted in an increase in feed consumption sufficient to change a weight loss into a gain.

Rolled Barley Added— Other lambs in this experiment were fed long hay and rolled barley. The plan was to feed enough barley to give lambs equal to those of the lambs fed the pelleted hay. But it was soon necessary to increase the amount of rolled barley from the initial level of one-quarter pound up to one-half pound per lamb per day to even approach the gains of those on pellets. The former ate 107 lb. of hay and 4.4 of rolled barley compared with 239 lb. of pellets consumed by the other lambs.

Using the same prices for hay and valuing the rolled barley at \$70 per ton gives a feed cost of \$2.75 for the pellet-fed lambs and \$2.01 for the others.

Gains by the pellet-fed lambs over the 84-day experiment averaged 6 lb. more than those fed long hay and barley. The extra gain was put on at a feed cost of 12.3 cents per pound.

Feed consumption was not high enough in either of the experiments cited to fatten the lambs.

Timothy Plus Grain— Another experiment was conducted in which average quality timothy hay was fed with a grain mixture. Pellets were made up with one-third grain and two-thirds hay and this was compared with the same grain and hay fed in the chopped form.

The average feed consumed over a 56-day period was 186 lb. of pellets by one group of lambs and 75 lb. of chopped hay and 54 lb. of grain by the others.

Setting the price of this better hay at \$18, the grain mixture at \$8, grinding the hay at \$2 and pelleting the mixed ration at \$6 per ton, the feed costs are \$4.29 for the pellet-fed lamb and \$2.82 for the others. The gains were 2 1/2 lb. by the pellet-fed lambs and 6 1/2 lb. by those fed chopped hay and grain. The extra gains put on by those on pellets had a feed cost of 9 cents a pound.

The very poor results obtained from feeding the poor quality hays either baled or chopped were stressed by Dr. Nicholson in summarizing these experiments. Their use should be avoided whenever possible, where they must be fed their value can often be economically improved by pelleting.

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Proper practices for peas

Dr. N.R. Bradner of CDA's experimental farm at Morden, Man., has catalogued some of the things necessary to get a high yield of good quality field peas.

Start with certified or registered grade seed — it will have less disease and be more uniform than commercial grade.

Choose varieties recommended for your area — for instance Century, Chancellor or Arthur for Manitoba.

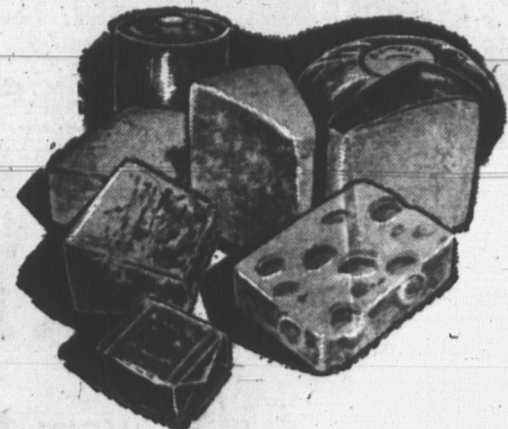
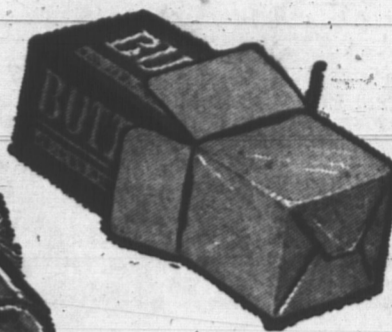
Treat the seed with captan, chloranil or a recommended fungicide for protection from root rots and soil-borne diseases.

Inoculate the seed with nitrogen-fixing bacteria just before planting (making sure that the specific strain of bacteria for peas is used).

Space the pea crops five or six years apart in your rotation schedule. This discourages pea diseases in the soil.

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