

Tomatoes

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE MARKETING OF SOUTH FLORIDA TOMATOES, SEASON 1930.

The movement of tomatoes from the East Coast of Florida is about over for the season. The section around Vero Beach will continue to ship for two or three weeks longer, but the peak movement is past. Movement from the Homestead-Miami area is practically finished. Shipments from Collier County on the West Coast is about over and the movement from the Lake Okeechobee region will be light as a larger percentage of the crop was damaged by the early March frost. The Manatee Section on the West Coast and the Central part of Florida are shipping rather heavily now. Some growers in South Florida are already planning for the crop to be grown next season.

Lighter Acreage

The acreage devoted to tomatoes in South Florida was below that of last season. In the fall of 1928, 4,000 acres were devoted to the production of the fall crop of tomatoes, but because of unfavorable growing conditions during the fall of 1929, only 300 acres were available for fall shipment. The acreage for spring shipment was estimated at 11,000 acres as compared with 14,700 acres last season. The following tabulation shows the acreage devoted to fall and early crop tomatoes during the past six seasons according to an estimate released by the Crop and Livestock Estimates Division on March 19, 1930:

	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930
<u>Fall:</u>						
Florida	-	-	-	400	4000	300
Texas	870	950	800	800	1300	3440
<u>Early:</u>						Preliminary
Calif., Imperial	860	1000	1300	1200	1400	1200
Florida:						
South	10240	4940	12260	11620	14700	11000
Other	23230	15760	17540	17240	18230	18300
Texas, Lower Valley	2500	3300	6500	7310	8000	11500

The acreage of tomatoes on the West Coast of Mexico this season was below that of last season according to a release of the Foreign Service Section of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. The acreage during the 1929-30 season was estimated at 49,608 acres compared with 63,509 acres for shipment during the 1928-29 season. Although the shipments this season do not indicate a decrease of acreage in Mexico, it must be remembered that a revolution was in progress on the Mexican West Coast during March and April of last year and that there were many interruptions in railroad traffic which were responsible for the comparatively light shipments.

Growing Season

The weather during the past season was not very favorable for the development of a good crop of tomatoes. Early fall rains cut down the acreage in many localities. Rains during the winter months hindered the development of the crop for spring shipment. Continued cool, damp weather injured the quality of the growing crop and also brought yield below that of a normal year. The frost of March 3-4 practically wiped out the acreage in the Everglades. The Lower Valley of Texas also received a frost which cut down the acreage and retarded the crop in that district. However, conditions on the West Coast of Mexico were favorable for the development of a large crop of good quality and shipments from this district were heavier than last year.

Florida Shipments Lighter

Because of the reduced acreage and the rather unfavorable growing season, shipments from Florida this season have not been as heavy as last season. The following figures show the comparison of shipments to May 1:

	E. Coast Fla.	Other Fla.	Total U. S.	Mexican Imports
Shipped to May 1, 1930	3115	578	3700	5573
Shipped to May 1, 1929	4766	1111	5891	3859

While the total shipments have not been much below those of last season, the shipments last year were distributed over a longer period of time than during this season. This season the peak movement from South Florida came during the last week in March and the peak of Mexican shipments to the United States came just slightly prior to the peak of shipments from Florida.

Brief Summary of the Marketing of South Florida Tomatoes, Season 1930.

Distribution

The Florida tomato shipments are usually rather widely distributed, but competition from Mexico helped confine shipments to the Eastern part of the country for a time. Later, many cars were billed to Middle Western markets. Several cars have found their way into Canada this season. Demand for tomatoes has been curtailed by the cold weather in the North, but with the advent of warmer April weather, the demand increased and there was a wider distribution of shipments during that month.

Prices Lower Than Last Year

In general, prices have been below those of last year although some very good prices were realized at the beginning and end of the season. Cold winter weather curtailed the demand in many Northern markets and this combined with heavy Mexican shipments depressed the market to a rather low figure during the last two weeks in March and the first week of April. Six-basket crates of Fancy count were selling at \$ 3.25-3.75 at shipping points during late February. By March 1 the price had declined to \$ 2.50-2.75. During the first week in April the market declined to \$ 1.50 for the best Fancy count stock with many shipment of poorer stock being consigned. But prices reacted favorably under the lighter movement during April and during the last week of the month stock of fair quality brought \$ 4.00 for Fancy count.

Prices in the terminal markets have been lower than last season. Late in February six-basket crates of good Fancy count brought from \$ 3.50-5.00 in New York and \$ 4.00-5.00 in Chicago. Prices held fairly well during the first two weeks of March, but declined under heavy receipts from Mexico and Florida during the latter part of that month. During the last week in March best Fancy count brought mostly \$ 2.50-3.50 in New York and about the same in Philadelphia. Boat receipts sold for \$ 2.50-3.50 for Fancy count in Baltimore. The first week in April Fancy count declined to \$ 2.50-2.75 in New York, \$ 2.25-2.50 in Philadelphia and \$ 2.50-2.75 in Chicago. However, prices reacted favorably and during the last week of April Fancy count brought \$ 5.00-6.00 in New York and \$ 5.00-6.50 in Philadelphia. Lugs packed 6x6 brought \$ 4.25 in Philadelphia and \$ 3.50-5.00 in Pittsburgh. Prices were holding steady the first few days in May.

A more complete summary of the marketing of the 1930 crop will be published before the 1931 season opens. Copies of this summary will be mailed free of charge when published to those who have requested them. If you wish to receive a copy of this summary when published, write now and request it. Address your request to - Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D. C. The coupon below may be used for making your request.

Bureau of Agricultural Economics,
Washington, D. C.

Please mail me a copy of the summary of "Marketing South Florida Tomatoes, Season of 1930", when it is released for publication.

Name _____

Address _____

V. H. Nicholson,
Federal-State Representative.