

Sec. Benson Urges Potato Growers To Reduce Acreage of 1958 Crop

Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson today advised potato growers who produce potatoes for late summer and fall harvest to review and revise their acreage plans so as to avoid marketing and price difficulties next fall and winter.

The 1958 "intentions to plant" report issued March 18 indicates that growers in certain key states are proposing to plant acreage substantially in excess of the acreage-marketing guides. Secretary Benson urged these growers to reconsider their plans so as to avoid both the cost of planting unnecessary acres and the production of a price depressing surplus.

IN FEBRUARY USDA issued its acreage marketing guides for summer and fall crop potatoes and recommended to growers certain changes from last year's acreage on a state-by-state basis. In order to plant within the Department's acreage-marketing guide, growers in several states and areas should reduce their 1958 acreage from last year's plantings. Those for which the intended acreage is indicated to be substantially in excess of the guide include Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Long Island, and New Jersey in the East; Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota in the Midwest, and all of the Western States except Montana.

"Too often attractive shipping point prices during a planting season cause growers to plant an excessive acreage for the following season's harvest," Secretary Benson said. "Thus the cycle of too much production, too little demand, too low prices, and too much distress among farm families begins again."

"I EARNESTLY remind growers of late summer and fall crop potatoes that their prices through the past mid-February were at lower levels because of surplus production, and that these prices no doubt would still be comparatively low were it not for reduced or delayed production in Southeastern States owing to severe weather. Don't be tricked by current prices into neglecting prudent planning."



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C of C Task Group Hears Farmers' Views

(Continued from page 1) tural interests of Lancaster County at times, re-emphasized Garber's point on the need for an active agricultural committee in the Chamber and an active program.

He said, "It's rare that an active Chamber of Commerce does not have an active agricultural committee. I've always felt that the lack of such a committee was a weakness of the Lancaster Chamber. We have not had an active committee in the last 16 or 18 years."

The task force will meet with the County Agricultural Council at the Council's next meeting to explain the functions of a Chamber of Commerce and to outline what the Chamber is trying to do. The Council will be asked to make suggestions on the needs of the Chamber and perhaps work out a standing working agreement with the Chamber of Commerce.

Lester Brubaker, 350 Strasburg Pike, Lancaster, is chairman of the fact-finding task force. Stanley Musselman, Quarryville, is president of the Agricultural Council.

Growers of fall harvested potatoes have produced a surplus each year for the past several years and have received low prices for their crop during most of their marketing period. USDA has assisted growers during these years by making payments for diversion of low-grade potatoes to livestock feed use and to the manufacture of starch and flour. Government expenditures during the past three years under this program have exceeded \$10 million.

"This type of assistance to potato growers cannot continue without growers and the industry taking positive steps to help themselves," Secretary Benson declared. "The basic step in self-help is the planting of an acreage that will produce a crop within the capacity of markets to absorb. The potato industry is on weak ground when it seeks surplus-recovery and price assistance from the Department while overplanting the acreage-marketing guides."

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Milk Plants to Collect Samples For Bang's Disease Ring Testing

HARRISBURG, April 16 — A savings of \$200,000 every three years is anticipated by the State Department of Agriculture with the addition of plant collections of milk for sampling under the statewide brucellosis testing program.

Agriculture Secretary William L. Henning said the new program replaces individual farm collection of milk samples which in the past were analyzed by technicians in one of the four State and Federal Bureau of Animal Industry mobile laboratories.

Department personnel will now take dairy herd samples of milk for a ring test from preserved composite samples (required under law) at the milk plants. They

will be analyzed by Department technicians for the possible presence of brucellosis infection.

According to Secretary Henning, the program will guarantee true milk samples, expedite operations and assure milk consumers of wholesome milk.

Under the new program, dairy cattle and beef breeding stock, not included in milk ring tests, will be blood tested every three years to guarantee complete coverage for animals missed in previous tests.

Pennsylvania recently became the 11th state in the nation to become modified certified brucellosis free which is attained when all the state's cattle meet U.S. State minimum requirements.

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