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Potato Stocks 5% Above Year Ago

The 4,800,000 cwt. of potatoes in storage on December 1 was 5 percent more than an December 1, 1968. These stocks consisted of potatoes held for all uses in the hands of Pennsylvania growers, local dealers and processors. Potatoes held by processors in excess of normal supplies for current operations were included in the estimate.

Disappearance (sales, home use, shrinkage, etc.) of 1968 potatoes to December 1, was 3,010,000 cwt. Last year disappearance to December 1 was 3,035,000 cwt and in 1967 was 3,720,000 cwt. Production in 1969 was 7,810,000 cwt compared to 7,585,000 cwt a year earlier.

Yield of the 1969 crop averaged 220 cwt per acre, 15 cwt more than a year ago and

second only to the record 1967 yield of 240 cwt. Many of Pennsylvania's potato producers had high yielding and good quality crops; however, yields in nearly all potato areas were below early expectations.

Light plantings for early processing markets began in early April and by mid-May planting of later season varieties was making rapid progress towards completion. During July the crop looked good in all areas; however, numerous fields had poor stands due to poor seed and excessive rainfall with some flooding. Dry weather prevailed in August but most crops were not hurt by this condition as they were a year ago since tuber size was generally well developed before the soils became dry.

Digging for storage began in mid-September and generally continued under favorable conditions through completion. Because of low specific gravity in the south and southeast, some producers had difficulties locating outlets for their potatoes. High yields with grower and processor storages full caused many producers to sell directly from the fields. As a result of this delay, a freeze on October 23 damaged some acreage. Most of this acreage was harvested but the extent of the damage will not be known until later in the storage season.

Pennsylvania Milk Production

continued to gain ground in Nov. with a 2.6 percent increase over the Nov. 1968 total, according to the State Crop Reporting Service. It was the fourteenth consecutive month in which milk production topped year earlier levels.

By comparison, November milk production in the United States dropped four tenths of one percent (0.4%) below the year earlier mark.

The November production in the state totaled 256 million quarts, enough to supply each Pennsylvanian with slightly less than three quarters of a quart per day for all purposes.

Milk production per cow in the state averaged 760 pounds (approximately 353 quarts) in Nov., up 20 pounds from Nov. 1968. The number of dairy cows was estimated at 725,000, the same as in October, but 1,000 less than in Nov. 1968.

Concentrates fed per cow averaged 13.2 pounds, up 2 pounds from November last year. The expected blend price for milk sold in November is estimated at a seasonal high of \$6.50 or 10 cents above November 1968.

Supplies of hay are generally ample but quality varies because some was rain damaged or over-ripe because weather conditions delayed the harvest. The corn crop was the second largest of record and yields of other grains were average or above.

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