

FACTS YOU NEVER KNEW!!!

By H. T. Elmo



Humble "Spud" Steps Out As State Farmers Move To Meet Competition

1100 MEMBERS OF GROWERS' ASSOCIATION JOIN SCHEME

POTATO MEN ADOPT MODERN METHODS

(The following article, from the January 4 issue of "We, The People," describes graphically what Pennsylvania farmers are doing to promote the sale of home-grown spuds. Because local stores and local farmers are co-operating in this modern movement, the article should interest Post readers.)

(See Editorial, Page 6)

Some like them boiled, some mashed, some baked; others wouldn't touch them unless they are fried, or even used in such tasty dishes as German pancakes. But so normal a part of America's eating habits is the potato that America's 125,000,000 inhabitants consume three 60-lb. bushels annually.

In 1933 potato growers raised a 500,000,000-bushel crop, somewhat more than normally required. That year over-production plus Depression drove prices down to as low as 20c. This year the potato crop is short and spuds cost about \$1.50. When the crop approximates 400,000 bushels, all interested parties are pleased. Potatoes sell for about \$1, not too dear for the home pocketbook, high enough to give the grower a nice return.

Potatoes are originally American. When they made their way to Ireland, the Irish Cabbler became a famed brand. Of late years America has smartly promoted its own potatoes. Smart advertising caused housewives to call for Idaho potatoes for baking. Smart production in the past decade has shoved Maine to the top of potato production States.

Meantime, while Maine's potato acreage has been increasing some 90,000 acres in the past ten years, Pennsylvania has lost that same acreage. Late in December Pennsylvania potato men gathered in Harrisburg in a concerted movement to do something about the Pennsylvania potato.

Last year's potato crop here was 25,000,000 bushels. Specialists averaged 254 bushels to the acre; "twiddlers"—farmers who use poor seed, fail to spray, make potatoes a sideline—got only 80 bushels. But the resultant average yield of 126 bushels is no indication that Pennsylvania's is poor potato soil. The world's highest yield per acre is from the Chester County farm of Walton & Sons, where all existing records were broken when 696 bushels were dug from one acre. In Lehigh, No. 1 potato county, Heidelberg Township raises 500,000 bushels annually, has more potato acreage than any other U. S. Township. In Pennsylvania are more than 1,100 members of the "400 Club", who must raise 400 bushels per acre. More than 500 growers have raised 500 bushels. There are more "400" growers here than in all other States combined. Over the past seven years, potatoes have been Pennsylvania's most valuable farm crop.

Can't Tell Difference

So proud are Pennsylvania growers of their product that the State Farm Show has a standing offer of \$5 for anyone who can distinguish between a baked Pennsylvania potato and its more publicized Idaho cousin. At last year's show the Pennsylvania Potato Growers' Association paid out not one \$5 bill, although 35,000 baked potatoes, with a plentiful sprinkling of Idahoes to make the offer genuine, were sold at 5c each, generously daubed with 600 lbs. of Pennsylvania butter.

Despite the quality of their soil and merchandise, Pennsylvania potato growers are not happy. They fancied that the chain store was the villain in what would otherwise be a happy drama. Last December the chain stores themselves confessed to doing wrong by Pennsylvania's potato growers and set out to right the wrong. The focal point of attack was the farmer's distribution habits.

A thousand stores given to buying items in carload lots found some time ago that Pennsylvania potatoes could be bought only in dribbles. Early attempt to buy produce from local farmers were soon abandoned, and the chains sent men into the produce markets after carload quantities—quantities which Pennsylvania's 10,000 individualistic potato men had never been in the habit of assembling. So the Pennsylvania market baskets began to fill with potatoes from Maine, where few fences break up the 1,000-acre potato farms.

Because some 19,000 Pennsylvania stores are now members of co-operative or voluntary chains, and because these stores sell the State's housewives most of their edibles, losing this market was a major catastrophe to State growers. Few industries can prosper when, as with the \$40,000,000 state potato industry, they lose one-

third of their markets. The potato growers' case was not happy.

Soon chain store operators found that their lot was no happier. They noted a decline in potato district purchases. Thus one Philadelphia-managed chain, with no Maine outlets, was sending \$2,000,000 to that state for potatoes, money which might otherwise have jingled from Pennsylvania farmers' pockets into their store tills.

New Note of Cooperation

Few groups are more traditional enemies than chain stores and farmers. But last July chain stores began trying to iron out the farmers' and their difficulties. Living up to his title of Public Relations counsel, tall Fred Johnston, press agent for the American Stores Company, presented a co-operative plan whereby chains (including independent stores in cooperative groups) and farmers might start doing business together again. High spot of the plan was its means of improving the farmers' marketing technique.

Eleven hundred members of the Potato Growers' Association one-ninth of the State's growers—agreed to adopt a standard package, set up an inspection system to size and grade potatoes. No longer tumbled into barrels or bags, cleaned, sized and graded pota-

Ladies' Aid Plans Supper February 19

The Ladies' Aid Society of Dallas M. E. Church will have a turkey supper on Friday night, February 19, according to plans made at a meeting on Thursday afternoon at the church.

Mrs. N. Whipp and Mrs. Charles Parrish are members of the committee for the February meeting. The March meeting will be a covered dish luncheon and election. A sample sale will be held in March, with the following committee in charge: Mrs. J. Schmeer, Mrs. C. A. Frantz, Mrs. E. A. Fiske, Mrs. J. R. Oliver, Mrs. Robert Allen, Mrs. William Carl, Mrs. Harold Titman and Miss Mary Still.

At Thursday's meeting Mrs. Margaret Hildebrand led singing and Mrs. William Carl and Mrs. Rebecca Monk led devotions.

The following attended: Mrs. C. A. Frantz, Miss Marguerite Frantz, Mrs. Rebecca Monk, Mrs. William Carl, Mrs. Burt Lewis, Mrs. C. A. Gordon, Mrs. William Baker, Mrs. Francis Freeman, Mrs. Ray Shiber, Mrs. M. L. Yaple, Miss Mary Still, Mrs. Frank Garrahan, Mrs. Charles Gates, Mrs. Winifred Thomas, Mrs. Floyd Ide.

atoes are packed in sturdy, attractive peck and bushel paper sacks. There are three grades. "Blue Label" potatoes must be a minimum of two inches in diameter, no heavier than 16 ounces, free of rot or injury. "Red Labels" must not be smaller than 1 1/2 inches, otherwise equal "Blue Labels." "Fellow Labels," packed only in bushel bags, are "rough"—too garbled to be first grade, but free of rot, all edible. Each bag bears the number of an inspector licensed by the State Bureau of Markets.

Large growers will have their own packing and inspection plants. Small growers will use co-operative central grading plants. This year Association members hope to sell 1,000,000 bushels; eventually, to sell most of the State's potatoes through these cooperative channels. For a \$1 fee anyone may join the Association. There is no commission fee, sales being made direct to store buyers, who will prefer State potatoes.

Buttercup Blooms At Farmer's Show

16-Year-Old Guernsey Cow Has Produced 122,000 Pounds Of Milk

Hard working sixteen year old Buttercup of Riveridge, a purebred Guernsey cow in the herd of the J. Barlow Cullum Est., Reading, is taking a week off to attend the Farm Products Show at Harrisburg, according to R. C. Wiggins, field secretary of the state association of breeders.

This old grandmother lays no claim to fame but records show that she has produced 122,000 pounds of milk in her lifetime and 5700 pounds of buttercup equal to seven tons of butter. In addition she has given birth to thirteen calves. She has never previously left her stall on the farm where she was born in 1920.

Buttercup is representing officially at the farm show the thousands of good dairy cows on Pennsylvania farms which ordinarily go on working year after year without any special recognition. Her throne will be lined

TRAINING CLASS

The second meeting of the Service Training Class was held Monday night by members of the Y. P. M. S. of Outlet and Trucksville Free Methodist Church at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Corey Evans. Ida Smith of Trucksville led devotions and Rev. Lewis Selfert of Outlet continued the story of "From Chaos to Character." Those present: Rev. Gertrude B. Ross, Florence Ham, Araminta and Ruth Smith, Marion Rogers, Carl Sterling, Florence and Gertrude MacMichael, Sheldon Roushey, Elizabeth Sorber, Dorothy Ide, Alberta Wilcox, Arden Evans, Arline Crispell and Phyllis Lyne.

QUARTERLY MEETING

The quarterly meeting of Trucksville and Dallas Free Methodist Churches will be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings with Rev. T. M. Holcomb, district elder, in charge.

with mirrors so that the spectator can at a glance obtain a complete picture of the old matron which, since 1920, has contributed more than her bit to dairying in the Keystone state.

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