

F. O. B. AUCTIONS

A New Marketing Bet Arizona Vegetable and Fruit Growers May Find Profitable to Analyze

By Chas. O'Connell

Shipping point inspection is the busiest youngster in government and state marketing today. Shipping point inspection means protection for both buyer and shipper. It means that a competent inspector under a joint arrangement between the U. S. department of agriculture and the state marketing agency, inspects cars at loading and issues a certificate as to condition of the car's contents.

The idea is to sell while in transit carlots of fruits and vegetables F. O. B. loading points, on government inspection. This idea originated last year in the Imperial Valley during the cantaloupe brawl. It was tried out as an experiment and proved very successful. The grape growers of California adopted the idea later on that season and an extremely satisfactory distribution resulted. Today there is no reason why the offering should not embrace the entire fruit and vegetable field.

It is not a question of taking the shippers word as to what he put into the car or the receiver's say so as to what he received. A trained inspector, a disinterested party of the third part, tells the true story of what is in the car for a specified service charge.

Selling at auction is not new, but auction sales based on shipping-point inspection certificates are decidedly new.

Two companies have been pioneers in the field. The National F. O. B. Auction Company with central offices at Pittsburg and the F. O. B. Auction company at Chicago. Auctions are held simultaneously in a number of different cities, the buyers bidding against each other by telegraph. Descriptions of the stuff offered for sale come over the wire from producing centers, wherever they may be, Arizona, California, or Florida. The descriptions of the contents of cars come in one day and are put before the buyers early the next. The offerings are given numbers and catalogued in mimeograph form and are sent out to the trade in time to reach the buyers in the first mail the day of the sale.

Right after lunch the buyers assemble, take a comfortable seat, and from their hip pockets pull out their catalogues only. The auctioneer mounts his platform, the telegrapher gets in touch with the other cities on the wire and the battle is on.

Keep in mind that the cars are all in transit. And their final destination at present is unknown. Of course, as yet these cars have not reached a diversion point. Perhaps you would like to follow one of the sales.

Lot No. 52, offered by F. O. B. Auction Company in Chicago. The catalogue shows that this car is Pacific Fruit Express No. 78880. It was shipped on the fifth of the month and routed over the S. P. and E. P. & S. W. railroads to Kansas City. It contained 300 crates of Arizona lettuce, graded to size of head, 75 crates of one size, 150 crates of another and 75 of still another. The description of the car reads: "Dry car, tight packed, well iced, car lined with paper and \$20 extra for icing, (this means that the buyer must pay for icing the car as well as for the freight)."

Directly following this information is the report of the inspector which reads as follows: Lettuce, 7 to 8 per cent of heads bursted, a few heads, about one and one-half per cent, show slimey condition. The remainder of the stock firm, fresh, crisp, green, well trimmed and free from defects. This appears to be a good car of lettuce and should be fairly close to Kansas City.

The bidding starts. Chicago asks, "How much am I bid?" Cleveland bids 80 cents, which means some buyer in the auction at Cleveland has started the ball rolling. Then word comes over the telegraph wire that Baltimore bids 90 cents. Cleveland comes back with 90 cents and Boston raises to \$1.00. The bidding continues until Cleveland buys at \$1.10.

The Cleveland buyer deposits his check with the auctioneer who deducts his commission and the remainder is sent to the shipper. This means then, that before the car actually reaches the buyer the producer of the lettuce has received and banked his check.

The advantages of F. O. B. auctions may be listed as follows:

Orderly marketing. The stuff goes to where it is needed most.

The best price is received.

Transportation charges reduced, due to carlot shipment.

Culls kept at home.

Better grading and packing insured.

Prompt payment for product.

Middleman and producer unfairness eliminated.

Changes market from buyers' market to sellers' market.

HOW TO OBTAIN A GOOD STAND OF ALFALFA

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to be short lived. Most of the alfalfa grown in Arizona belongs to the common group and is the ordinary purple-flowered, smooth alfalfa. It is a good yielder, well suited to our conditions, and taking everything into consideration, is very satisfactory.

There is however, one outstanding variety for Arizona. This is the Hairy Peruvian. It is a vigorous grower, grows well in cool weather, recovers quickly after cutting, has good seed habits and is the heaviest yielding alfalfa grown in the state.

The Peruvian plant has fewer stems and is less branching. It is taller and more upright than the common alfalfa. The stems are quite woody and it is necessary to cut early. Because of its coarseness and few stems, it is necessary to plant about 20 pounds of seed per acre, where 15 pounds of common alfalfa seed is plenty.

Before buying alfalfa seed the purchaser should have information on the following three points: The name of the variety, the section of the country in which it was produced, and the quality of the seed with regard to both germination and purity. This information is not difficult to obtain, and the first cost in buying seed is many times offset by the higher yields that are sure to result. In other words, cheap seed may be more expensive than high priced seed.

CAPRIFICATION OF THE FIG

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That is the task with which man in his greed for gain entrusted her.

Henceforth, when you smack your lips and exclaim about the syrupy goodness of the fig, give a thought to the tiny fig wasp and her sacrifice.

The pollen she carried and worked herself to death to distribute is entirely responsible for the lusciousness of the fruit.