1962 POTATO & ONION OUTLOOK

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Late Summer Washington Potatoes (Potatoes dug in July, August, and September) -- Outlook is uncertain and unpredictable at this time but developments indicate a chance for good to fair prices.

A. Prices for our summer potatoes are governed by five factors:

(1) Supply of old crop potatoes in May.

(2) Size of California's late spring crop (Dug mostly in May and June)

(3) Size of the U.S. early summer crop (Dug in June and July)

(4) Size of the U.S. late crop (Dug in July, August, and September)

(5) Late summer production in the Pacific Northwest and California

B. Most of these factors seem to be heading for a "medium" situation.

(1) Supply of old crop potatoes in May.

This could go either way. Supply of storage potatoes has been the largest ever. But the diversion program has pushed disappearance to a record level. If diversions continue at the December rate, the supply of old potatoes will not be excessive in May.

(2) Size of California's late spring crop.

California's late spring areas plan to reduce acreage 18 percent. This would make their acreage about as small as at any time in the past 10 years. Yields were fairly high last year and are likely to be a little lower unless growing conditions are better than average.

(3) Size of the early summer crop.

Most of this crop is produced in the southeastern part of the United States without irrigation. Per acre yields vary quite a bit depending on the weather. Yields have been high the past two years. Weather will be the main factor determining the size of this crop. Any acreage reduction in this area is likely to be small.

(4) Size of the late summer crop.

Production of the late summer areas as a whole does not vary much from year-to-year. A small reduction in acreage may come as a result of last summer's real low prices.

(5) Late summer production in the Pacific Northwest and California.

Both acreage and production are likely to be reduced some this year. Prices were very low last summer and per acre yields were unusually high.

Fall Potatoes - Low prices seem likely again for the 1962 crop. Prices may be a little better than those received for the 1961 crop, but not much better unless two things happen:

1. Acreage is cut more than now seems likely.

2. Growing conditions are unusually poor in most areas.

A. Acreage is not likely to be reduced more than 5 percent.

We have had a low price year following two years of good prices. We have had two other situations like this in the past 10 years:

(1) 1954 followed the low price year of 1953 which followed the two good price years of 1951 and 1952. Acreage was reduced 4½ percent.

(2) 1957 followed the low price year of 1956 which followed the two good price years of 1954 and 1955. Acreage was reduced 2½ percent.

B. Per acre yields for the fall states are not likely to drop below 188 bags, a drop of 3½ percent from last year's near-record yield of 194.9 bags.

(1) In 1954 yields increased; in 1957 they dropped 3 1/3 percent.

(2) The only yield drops in the past 12 years that exceeded 1957 were 1959 when yields dropped 6.6 percent from 1958's all-time record of 195.1 bags and 1951 when the yield dropped 6.2 percent from the preceding year.

C. Production of around 185 million bags of fall potatoes seems likely.

This is what we would get if acreage is reduced 5 percent and if yields drop to 188 bags.

(1) Except for last year, it would be the largest fall crop on record. (Estimates on the present season grouping basis are available back through 1949.)

(2) Such a crop would be slightly larger than the 1958 crop which brought extremely low prices.

(3) It is possible that production might be reduced enough in the Russet areas (Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, Montana, and Utah) to make prices fairly good for Russets. The chances of this seem fairly slim, however.

a. Production in the Russet areas jumped 31 percent last year. Acreage was up 16 percent and yields were up 13 per cent.

b. Yields in the Russet areas are not likely to fall back to the 1960 level. Idaho's per acre yield in 1960 was the lowest since 1954. Oregon's and California's was the lowest since 1955.

c. Acreage in the Russet areas is not likely to be cut back more than half of last year's 16 percent increase.

d. It is barely possible that the processing industry might expand enough to bring fair prices for Russets. However, the rate of expansion in the potato processing industry has slowed. In fact, 10 percent fewer potatoes were processed for food in Idaho from July 1 to December 31 of the current season than a year earlier.

Onions Look Bad

Onions harvested in the summer and fall of 1962 are pretty sure to bring low prices. Prices for 1961 onions were good. Output is nearly always increased too much following a good price year.

In the 22 years beginning with 1940, we have had 9 years of good prices for late onions. In every case except one, the good price year was followed by a year of sharply increased production and lower prices. The only exception was the good price year of 1951 which was followed by reduced production and even higher prices. There are two reasons why 1951 was an exception: (1) Prices were not very favorable at harvest time, and (2) 1951 was a bonanza year for potatoes. In fact, potato prices were so much better than onion prices in 1951, even though onion prices were fairly good, that many producers shifted from onions to potatoes in 1952.

The Walla Walla area and part of Yakima Valley produces onions for sale in July. These are called "early summer" onions. Early summer onions have brought favorable prices in 6 of the past 22 years. In each case up to 1961, the good price year was followed by lower prices -- sharply lower in all but one case.

1962 POTATO INSECT CONTROL CALENDAR**

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Month	Pests that treatment may be required for	Possible damage if soil or crop is not treated	Insecticide and amount of active ingredient to apply per acre		Time or frequency of application
October to April	WIREWORMS	Worms kill seed and infest the tubers	DDT or Dieldrin or Aldrin	10 lbs. 2 lbs. 5 lbs.	Apply broadcast and thoroughly mix in top 6-9 inches of soil. Repeat every 3 to 7 years when worms average 2 per square foot.
	FLEA BEETLES	Adults injure leaves. Worms damage tubers.	Aldrin or Dieldrin	5 lbs. 2 lbs.	Apply to soil of fields in areas where damage has previously occurred.
June to August	APHIDS	Reduce yields, indirect cause of NET	Thiodan or Endrin	1 lb. 9 ozs.	Start June 15 and continue every 2 weeks to at least August 1. Apply Endrin with tractor-drawn equipment. Do not apply Endrin within 3 days of harvest.
May to June	CUTWORMS	Cut off plants below and above ground.	DDT	2 lbs.	Apply to soil and foliage when cutworms first appear.
June to August	LYGUS BUGS	Adults cause top leaves to wilt and die.	DDT or Parathion or Thiodan	2 lbs. 12 ozs. 1 lb.	Apply to foliage as needed; bugs migrate when alfalfa hay is cut or weeds die from drought. Do not apply parathion within 5 days of harvest.
June to October	LEAFHOPPERS	Can reduce yields or spread virus diseases	DDT or Parathion or Thiodan	1½ lbs. 12 ozs. 1 lb.	Start about June 15, or when leafhoppers first appear, and continue every 10 days as needed. Do not apply parathion within 5 days of harvest.
July to October	IRIS WHITEFLY	Larvae weakens plant.	DDT or Thiodan	1½ lbs. 1 lb.	Start about July 1, or when adults first appear, and continue every 10 days as needed.
July to August	THRIPS	Adults & larvae scar lower side of leaves.	Aldrin or DDT	½ lb. 1½ lbs.	Apply to foliage when thrips have started noticeable injury.
May to August	COLORADO POTATO BEETLE	Adults & larvae strip plants & lower yield.	Dieldrin or DDT or Thiodan	½ lb. 1½ lbs. 1 lb.	Apply to foliage when larvae outnumber egg masses & repeat when necessary. Destroy black nightshade. Do not apply dieldrin within 3 days of harvest.

1962 Potato Insect Control Calendar**

Month	Pests that treatments may be required for	Possible damage if soil or crop is not treated	Insecticide and amount of active ingredient to apply per acre	Time or frequency of application
July to August	BLISTER BEETLES	Adults ravenously consume the leaves.	DDT or Parathion	1½ lbs. 12 ozs.	Apply control measures to foliage quickly--treat only infested areas. Do not apply parathion within 3 days of harvest.
July to September	GRASSHOPPERS	Insects devour leaves and stems.	Aldrin or Toxaphene	6 ozs. 1½ lbs.	Apply to adjacent, infested, uncultivated land or 30-foot border of field.
July to August	SPIDER MITES	Mites kill leaves. Web leaves with silk.	Parathion-sulfur or Trithion or Kelthane	*12 ozs. 1 lb. 1 lb.	Apply to foliage when mites appear or not later than start of damage. *12 ozs. parathion with sulfur dust. Do not apply parathion within 5 days of harvest.

**Do not feed tubers from fields with soil treatments of DDT, Dieldrin or Aldrin to lactating cows.

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