



HORTICULTURAL DEPARTMENT

Edited by F. Walden

To our subscribers: Owing to the advancing age of Mr. F. Walden and also to his increasing correspondence, it will be impossible for him to continue the answering of personal letters addressed to him on matters pertaining to fruit growing. It is with difficulty that the management of The Ranch has been able to retain the services of Mr. Walden and this notice is printed here in this place so that the subscribers desiring his expert advice, judgment and criticism on matters horticultural will understand that they must look for replies to their letters in this department. Mr. Walden cannot undertake to answer such inquiries by mail. Further than this, persons who are subscribers to The Ranch living in the Pacific Northwest, can do their Eastern friends a favor by having them become subscribers to The Ranch and readers of this department.

EDITOR OF THE RANCH.

W. N. White, an apple buyer of New York, has written the following letter to The Ranch in reply to my article in the June 1 issue relative to changing the size of the apple box:

New York, July 21, '08.

My attention has just been called to your issue of June 1 wherein Mr. F. Walden writes about the advisability of changing the size of the apple box.

I have hitherto been a great admirer of Mr. Walden's writings and considered his views on horticulture to be equal to anything that I have ever seen or heard not only in the West but in the East, but I confess I have to differ with him as regards the present apple box or rather boxes, because each particular country seems to have its own style of boxes. Mr. Walden is quite correct about the cubic contents of the bushel, but that bushel that he is talking about is the "strick" bushel measure in the same way as you would measure a bushel of corn and run a stick across the top pushing off all corn that would be above the rim. Outside of grain all bushel measures of produce are sold by the "heaped" bushel, and I have known in England men selling to the public bushels of apples and allowing the customer to put as many apples on the top of the bushel as could be conveniently placed there.

Potatoes, onions and apples are sold all over the country by the heaped measure; that such heaped measure is the acknowledged fact, is proved by the Government figures as to what constitutes a bushel. Outside of bananas, which come into the country duty free, every kind of produce has to pay a tax; that tax on fruit, onions and potatoes is at per bushel of so many pounds. A bushel of green apples is 50 pounds, a bushel of onions is 57 pounds, and a bushel of potatoes is 60 pounds. Those weights are recognized in most of the states in the Union; as a matter of fact, Wisconsin gives 57 pounds of apples to the bushel. All boxes in every state are supposed to be bushel boxes and it may be that they adopt the "strick" measure bushel. That they are not the "heaped" or the legal bushel is proved by their weights, as their gross weight does not exceed 50 lbs., and the box and paper often goes 8 lbs., and I have seen carloads of some of these boxes of apples here only weighing 46-47 lbs. gross.

What are the understood measurements? In Washington there are two kinds of boxes used—one box 18x11½x10½, equal to 2,173 inches; another box 20x11x10, equal to 2,200 inches. There are also two kinds of boxes used in Oregon—one 20x10x11½, equal to 2,357 inches; another 18x10½x11, equal to 2,174 inches. In California the box is 20½x11x12, equal to 2,194 inches. In Colorado the box is 18x11x12 inches equal to 2,376 inches, and I am told that in British Columbia the box is still of different dimensions. In fact, I have seen it stated that seven different sizes of boxes have been seen on the Seattle market at one time.

Mr. Walden says that "on the Pacific Coast you practically measure nothing, that wheat, oats and barley being sold by the bushel are not measured, but weighed." If the law of the land states that a bushel of apples shall be fifty pounds to the bushel, why not have a standard bushel box? Again: I am rather surprised to

hear Mr. Walden state that "if people East do not want to buy our pack of apples, they can refuse to do so." Will Mr. Walden tell me if the East does not buy the apples, or if the apples from the West are not sent to the East, can the West eat all of them; and, if so, at what price? Poor argument, Mr. Walden.

It is quite true that the Eastern buyers went over your country last year and bought thousands of cases of apples—the writer one of them—but I venture to assert you will not see so many anxious people this year as there was last. At the present time the growth of apples in Washington is in its infancy except to a favored few. Before the Portland Exposition Washington apples were unknown. At the present time hundreds of thousands of trees have been planted yearly, and Washington apples are taking up their position alongside of other states throughout the world.

I suppose Mr. Walden has heard of the men who stovepipe their potatoes and onions. I wonder if he has ever heard of men in Washington who have made the boxes to fit the apples, and by cutting off half an inch from the ends and sides they have produced a box of apples to make 5 tiers look like four-tier fruit. I remember one man last year that packed four-tier apples, tops and bottoms, and five-tier fruit in the center, because the difference between what he sold at five tiers and what he sold as four tiers represented 50c a box. I suppose if a person went into a shop and asked for a pound of sugar, he would expect to get 16 ounces of it, avoirdupois weight, and not 12 ounces, troy weight.

The writer has been in the apple business for a number of years before any apples were grown in Washington to be sent out of the state, and knows that the boxes have been gradually getting smaller and smaller.

Mr. Walden speaks about the pear box. That is not sold as a bushel, and the reason that the box is not larger is on account of the tenderness of the fruit, the skin of the pear being more tender than the skin of the apple; in fact, for pears to be exported to Europe they are usually placed in what is known as the half box, containing three layers of pears. In France, which supplies trainloads of pears every day to England, pears are packed in layers, two, three and four layers, with a division between each layer.

Mr. Walden is wrongly informed if he thinks that the bill now before Congress has been sent there by any grower in the East. The growers in the East would stove-pipe their goods and have done so, and it is to prevent this poor and dishonest packing and short measure that the buyers have come together and have said, "We want an interstate law," that where we buy goods outside of our own state, we shall know the size of the barrel or the size of the box. We shall know what we are going to get for our money. The question of the amount will always be what can be agreed on between the buyer and the seller. The seller, if he does not like the price, need not take it, but the buyer having once made the price knows what he should get by the standard measure and the standard pack, and that such a thing is required and is for the benefit of the country, is proved by the government regulations now in existence in Canada and which have been in existence there for the past ten years. At one time Canadian fruit was a byword on the English market, and owing to the different styles of packing the good grower that took particular pains with his fruit to store and properly pack, found that he was suffering from the bad habits of his neighbor who was a beginner and who took no trouble with his fruit, simply selling it as Canadian fruit, but by so doing lowering the name of Canadian fruit, and as this fruit was especially grown for the English market, Canada at the present time has

to export more than two-thirds of her crop to the English market. The government knowing that a large interest of the country was bound up in this article, passed laws to prevent anyone exporting goods not properly packed. By doing this they have raised the standard of Canadian fruit and a barrel of Canadian apples will always sell for from 50c to \$1 more than Western New York apples side by side on the English market.

For a small sum a buyer contracting for a large quantity of fruit in Canada can call for a government inspector to oversee the packing of the fruit and see that he has got what he bought. The same thing applies to Australia and New Zealand and Tasmania. I know of firms in England who buy large quantities of hay in Canada, and for 30c a ton can have every bale examined by a government inspector to see that he got what he bought.

That other countries are in favor of upholding the name of their produce is proved by the laws now in operation in Denmark, where the bulk of her butter and farm produce is trans-shipped, daily to England, and this government regulation has been the making of the country. No more prosperous agricultural country exists in Europe today.

The bill now before Congress is only for interstate commerce—your own local trade can be carried on in any way you please. I suppose it was the local trade that Mr. Walden meant when he talked about the long established custom, because, so far as interstate commerce is concerned, there has been very little Washington apples in the East beyond a few years. In regulating the box, that does not mean to regulate the price; prices will be governed by supply and demand.

Washington fruit will one day become a large factor in the markets of the East, providing the right sorts are sent East and the pack is put up in a proper manner and a regulation box agreed on. Washington has, in my opinion, in many parts as good a soil for the growth of apples as anywhere in America. Some of the growers do their work in a proper manner;

Others who have not had the experience can also be educated to do their work in the same manner; it is only a question of regulation and systematizing.

W. N. WHITE.
I have thought it best to publish Mr. White's letter in full for fear he might think he is not treated fairly. We want both sides of this question fairly presented and have no desire to shut off anyone because he does not agree with us. But it must be

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