

WISCONSIN TOBACCO REPORTER

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NUMBER 2

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Janesville, - - - Wisconsin.

NOTE BOOK SKETCHES

We surrender space for a couple of growers to air their views in this column. One makes timely suggestions regarding the handling of the crop, while the other throws a few bricks at the editor and accuses him of bearing down the price of tobacco, a charge we are confident those who have followed these columns carefully will not coincide with.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE, BOYS?

The storm tossed mariner embraces the first opportunity to take a shot at the sun to determine his location. So, also, should we growers of tobacco weigh well each determining factor in fixing our price for our goods. The goods? Well, yes, we have got them. The finest ever. Odds of them, but so also has seemingly every state in the Union. And foreign countries? Hampered as they have been by lack of transportation facilities to put their goods upon the market, he, indeed, must be in possession of exclusive information to fortell how much they have accumulated to dump upon the trade at the first opportunity. It is possible that the fitful and at times even frenzied rush for bargains of last June and again in August were based on definite and exact knowledge of the wants of the manufacturers, and then again, perhaps, it was only a string of suckers chasing a speculative cuss who likely even now is laid up in a hospital for repairs to his ego, who did not know and does not yet know where he is going to head in at. The close of the war may make prices advance or vice versa. Who knows? The tightness of the money market and the indisposition of the banks to finance tobacco deals of any kind will surely retard business for a while. We have got the goods—you bet—the best ever—but it takes money to play marbles. And to us growers who did not get on the loaded wagon last summer it stands us in hand to put our crops up in a manner free from all damage, so that it will be in good condition when the roses bloom again. And should we even have to hold it through the sweat, have we not our Equity warehouse to sort, pack and store it until such time as the manufacturers will need them? We would suggest that while stripping, the sortable tobacco be carefully separated from the so-called stemming tobacco. In fact, the two-bundle box game seems to be the most feasible one to play—all tobacco of good quality, both binders and fillers, in one box, and mongrel (off-colored and generally non-descript stuff) put in the other box, to be sold at the present ruling high price for stemming, thereby leaving the better stuff by itself to be sold to manufacturers. At the present time labor conditions in the packing centers are such that the dealers will likely be more particular in buying to give the preference to those crops which have been well cleaned in stripping. The casing season has been a good one, not too wet, and the colors are showing up fine and it looks like good, safe, keeping tobacco, and it will surely bring the price when conditions are right again.

Yours,

GROWER.

Madison, Wis.
Editor Reporter:—Having been a subscriber to your paper for a good many years and a tobacco grower, I feel as if I must let you know my feelings in regard to your stand as to the price of 1918 tobacco. How can anyone grow tobacco under the conditions that have prevailed this season and remain a tobacco grower unless we have great inducement to remain in the business? In fact lots want raise tobacco in the future right around here. One man had two sheds to hold 16 acres and has pulled both down and used the lumber for a cow barn. He says "no more tobacco." I can count from my house four sheds empty; the owners say, "no tobacco." It is a dog's life to raise it and then it interferes with all the other work, to say nothing of the fertilizer it takes and hand work. Also it is not like any other thing a farmer has to sell—stock, grain, hay, milk, etc.; for these there is a market and a grade, but tobacco, the buyers talk the matter over, then send out men (?) with a limit as to what they shall pay and they buy all crops, good, bad, etc., they can for as much less as a fool farmer will take. Then even you are not sure you will ever get what the contract calls for. You must remember this year we had to pay 100 per cent more for stemming, also for coal, pulling plants, hoeing, etc., and for harvesting the wages were \$7.00 a day for 10 hours' work, plus board. Lath was \$10.00 a thousand, jack pine poles 40 cents apiece. These prices are 140 per cent higher than formerly. Now they are talking 35 cents an hour for stripping, with board, so unless we receive a good big figure for our crops the buyers will have killed the goose that laid the golden egg. Last spring you in your paper advised all to raise tobacco as they were sure of a good price. Now you say the farmers are hogs because they want a good price for their hard labor, etc., etc. Furthermore, there is no reason for us not getting a "melon" instead of the buyers taking it all. After the crops get into the hands of the trust or buyers prices will go out of sight with every country the sun shines on yelling for tobacco. By the way, why don't you state in your paper sales some of the prices buyers get? You never do. In conclusion, be fair: let the buyers do the running down of the market themselves.

Yours truly,

J. C. LATHAM.

P. S.—In your paper two weeks ago you said everything else is going down, why not tobacco? This is not so. Hay, milk, hogs, etc., even coal is up \$1.10 a ton.

WISCONSIN TOBACCO MARKET

EDGERTON, WIS., Nov. 29, 1918.

The first hard freeze of the season to penetrate the curing sheds has come during the week, but the hanging tobacco was so well past any danger of fat stems that no injury could possibly occur. Stripping of the crop where growers took down a portion or all of their tobacco is proceeding and until the last few days the weather has been so mild that the work could be conducted in the sheds.

The resumption of buying of the balance of the crop so patiently waited for by the growers has not yet come in any organized movement. The only occasional sale coming to notice are at figures under the earlier purchases.

The first delivery of the new tobacco in this market came Tuesday, when the P. Lorillard Co. received 35 acres, which made in almost perfect condition. The crops weighed in about 1600 pounds to the acre and while the prices paid were not among the top ones, growers obtained something over \$450 per acre, which is an indication that the farmers are to receive a handsome revenue from tobacco this year.

The shipments out of storage reach 100 cases and 4 cars of bundles from this market since last report.

VIROQUA, WIS., Nov. 20, 1918.

The third period of case weather has been with us for a half week and it put hanging tobacco in prime condition to remove from the poles. Nearly every grower has taken down all or a portion of their holdings, and every available person in town and country is now engaged in stripping and bundling the large and most excellent year's growth of the weed.

We understand that some growers who contracted their crops early in the season have asked to make deliveries the current week, and will be permitted to do so.

So far as we can learn there has been no attempt to start buying again in this section.—Censor.

New York.

NEW YORK, Nov. 23, 1918.

The cigar leaf market continues about as reported last week. There is no activity in old tobaccos, and no attempt is being made to buy the new. In fact, every one is playing a waiting game. As has been explained before, those who have stocks of leaf tobacco on hand are waiting to see what the situation is going to be. There is every reason to hope that the cigar manufacturing industry are on the eve of better conditions, due to better labor conditions, and the relaxation of the restrictions in the matter of packing, etc., under which they had expected that they would have to conduct their business. It is undeniable that the restrictions proposed would have seriously upset the cigar manufacturing industry, and a sigh of relief went up when the United States Tobacco Journal, in a special bulletin service, flashed the glad tidings from one end of the country to the other that the restrictions had been lifted. Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that the cigar manufacturers are, in the main, plentifully supplied with leaf tobacco. Regardless of whether the leaf market resumes activity or not, their is little likelihood of their having to pay higher prices for the 1918 crop than they paid for what they have on hand, and for the next six months at least they will be using tobacco that they now own. A concerted effort is being made to see to it that the leaf tobacco industry shall not be hampered by an undue restriction in the facilities for export.—Journal.

NEW YORK, Nov. 21, 1918.

Contrary to quite generally held expectations, the return of peace has not in any great degree altered the attitude of the majority of Water Street packers toward the domestic market situation. Outside of a few scattering transactions the market remains devoid of any signs of any significant activity. While there are a number of persistent optimists among the packers who are confident that the eventful opening of the extensive export business which is certain to follow the resumption of shipping and the relief of the labor situation in the cigar manufacturing industry will create a heavy demand for domestic tobacco which will hold prices at their present levels, these men are undoubtedly in the minority. However, as all Water Street packers agree, one guess is as good as another in these uncertain times and, in this particular instance, it is possible the minority may be right.

The conservative attitude which the majority of packers maintain, however, toward domestic leaf is based upon the belief that the curtailment of production of cigars during the war has created a surplus which will keep the manufacturers supplied with raw material for many months to come. Even should the labor situation be relieved by the speedy return of cigarmakers to their factories, these packers hold that the leaf surplus thus created will be sufficient for the needs of the immediate future. Lack of shipping facilities and huge stocks of cheap foreign tobacco now in storage awaiting shipment to European markets will, they believe, preclude any great demand for domestic tobacco for export. Not until there is a radical change in the haughty attitude of the growers and a sharp revision downward of the prices at which farmers are holding the record crop of 1918, they say, will there be any possibility of a break in the apathy which now rules the domestic market.—Leaf.

(Concluded on Page 8)

Ways To Save

From every month's salary you receive, must be paid your living expenses, clothing, food, rent and incidentals.

"And incidentals" usually includes any number of needless spending items—often the total is as much as the other three items of necessity.

Why not bank \$5.00 a week and charge it to "incidentals"? You will not miss it in your expense account, yet it will be where you can have it for use in case of necessity.

Start a savings account today. \$1.00 is sufficient for the first deposit.

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