Quality Products
Forge Ahead

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Suggestions for Grading, Packaging and
Loading Louisiana Fruits and Vegetables

by H. S. Moles
Extension Marketing Specialist
L. S. U., Baton Rouge, La.
PRODUCTS

Inbound crops should meet the same requirements, and inspection certificates are required to arrive by the time the cars arrive; otherwise state inspectors are instructed to check the cars for grade and condition so that receivers will have the same information on inbound produce that is required on outbound produce.

CORRECT MARKING BREEDS CONFIDENCE

Inspectors employed by the State Department of Agriculture and living in scattered points in the state are available to assist all growers and shippers to properly grade and package their products after they have been packaged so that the correct grade can be shown. If you do not know who your closest inspector is, ask your County Agent, or phone or write the Supervising Inspector, whose address is State Capitol Building, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His office phone number is Baton Rouge 3-2707.

Almost any kind of fruit and vegetable can be purchased in the French Market in these retail stands, many of which have not been closed in 50 years.

Louisiana PRODUCTS

Correct marking breeds confidence. Quality and correct marking go hand in hand. During their season, merchants now look to Louisiana for high-quality strawberries, sweet potatoes, shallots, and other products. These products are so regularly graded, properly packaged, and correctly labeled or stamped for grade that terminal receivers depend upon our shippers for their supplies. This reputation can be further improved by seeing to it that our other products are equally well prepared for market. Growers should acquaint themselves with the various grades, should learn the type of packages which the markets want, and both growers and shippers should learn the meaning of the words used in inspection certificates so that they can properly word their wires.

CONSIDERATIONS OFFERED FOR IMPROVING THE HANDLING OF OUR PRODUCTS

It is impossible to give in detail all of the marketing information which might be needed to properly prepare our products for shipment. A few of the more important products here discussed might be mentioned, and these products we hope you will be able to find suggestions which will help you realize maximum prices for your products.
Louisiana strawberries are picked during March, April and early May and are packed in 24 - pint crates.

The proper handling of this crop is of major importance. It requires picking the berries when well colored, but not overripe, and careful handling and packing. The crates should then be inspected as they are loaded to eliminate the possibility of off-grade crates getting into the cars. After loading has been completed the cars should be pre-cooled to a relatively low temperature so that the berries will remain in proper condition in transit and be ready for distribution upon arrival in the markets.

The berries are picked in hand carriers in the field and taken to sheds where they are face packed in 24 pint crates. All immature, misshapen or otherwise injured berries should be eliminated during the packing process. As the berries must be handled a second time the utmost care should be used to prevent bruising.

Years ago strawberries were shipped in ordinary express cars. Later boxes with ice in the center and known as pony refrigerators were used. Still later Express Refrigerator cars were used. Today fans are hung in these cars and the cold air from the bunkers is forced over the crates, thereby reducing the temperature from normal air to around 40 degrees F. before the berries leave for the Northern Markets.

Chunks of ice are used to fill the bunkers. The top is then crushed and from 150 pounds to 200 pounds of coarse rock salt {size No. "A"). is added on top of the ice. The amount used is dependent on outside air temperatures. Canvas baffles are used to cover the portion of the opening not occupied by the motors and air delivery tubes conduct the air out toward the center of the car so that the center receives the full force of the cold air.

It ordinarily requires from 2 to 3 hours to reduce the temperature to 38 degrees in the top layer crates in the doorway and 40 degrees in the bottom crates in the doorway. The cars are ordinarily delivered with the bunkers full of ice for loading and should again be refilled with ice prior to and following precooling.

Rhizopus Rot, which is the decay which produces soft wrinkled berries, does not grow below 45 degrees F, and other berries have been precooled, they normally carry to Market with little change in condition and in attractive form for distribution.

Strawberries are planted each year during November and December and the rows are mulched with pine needles or rice straw to keep the berries up off the ground.
The experiment Station has developed a new strawberry known as the Klonmore or "630" which is sweeter and bears earlier than the Klondyke. Many growers like it because it is leaf-spot resistant and more uniform in size.

The ripe strawberries are picked early in the morning in hand carriers and are taken to field sheds where they are face packed.

Berries too ripe to be loaded into the railway cars in crates are brought in hand carriers on "flats" and are delivered to the cold pack plants for freezing. This picture shows both types of berries on the same truck.