Crates are loaded 8 rows wide and 4 layers high and spaced so that air can circulate freely. Note the precooling fan in place with a canvas tube in front to conduct the cold air towards center of car.

Cans are iced by the carriers before delivery. They should again be iced before being precooled, and are re-iced after precooling. This picture shows a hoist used in strawberry district for elevating ice.

The auctions located in Hammond sell the berries each evening after supper to the highest bidder for cash.

Representatives of the larger chain stores and from many of the larger wholesale houses in the terminal markets sit in the auction lofts and bid for the cars. These men have watched the loading during the day and have made notes of the cars which they wish to buy.
The overripe berries are washed and graded, before being taken to remove decayed and injured berries. They are then packed in cartons, 30-pound tins and 450-pound barrels which are frozen solid and stored at low temperatures for use in the ice cream trade, making jams, etc.
Inspectors check each lot as it is delivered to the car to determine the grade.

Beans

Several types of Snap beans are shipped from Louisiana. The Round Green beans are of two general forms— the stringless Black Valentine and Giant Stringless. Then there are flat green beans (the Bountiful) and Wax Beans. In addition some Pole Beans are grown, particularly in the territory around New Orleans, and during the early spring Pole Beans are sold and shipped in a limited way throughout south Louisiana.

Snap Beans are packed in bushel hampers and are shipped either by Express, or by Freight. We produce two crops, one being harvested during late April and through May. The other is a Fall crop and is harvested during October and early November.

We ship two grades, U.S. No. 1 being the better quality beans which are harvested during favorable weather; and U.S. Combination constituting a grade which contains not over 25 per cent of misshapen or injured beans, not considered seriously damaged.

To secure a minimum weight load, the hampers are arranged 3 hampers high and are stacked together as tightly as possible to prevent shifting of the load. This leaves little space for ventilation and prevent shifting of the load.

Snap beans are packed in bushel hampers and are transferred to the cars either direct from the field or after being repacked by the shipper.

Cucumbers

Two crops are harvested each year. The first during May and early June and the second in September and October. The fall crop is the more important and shipped largely from Ponchatoula, Hammond, Albany and Denham Springs with some pickles going out during the spring from Tangipahoa. Prior to packing they should be washed in ice water to remove spray residues and cool the cucumbers. This will also cause live worms to drop off.

Cucumbers should be re-packed with large, medium and small sizes packed in separate bushel tubs or bushel crates. The crate is preferred.

Sweet Peppers

This crop is grown mainly around Ponchatoula, Hammond, Albany and Belmont and is shipped during late May, June and early July. They are packed in bushel hampers and loaded 868 hampers to the car. Being shipped during hot weather they should be precooled with the same equipment used to precool strawberries.
IRISH POTATOES

Two crops of Irish potatoes are produced—spring and a fall crop. The spring crop is the more important and is harvested during late April, May, and early June. Two varieties are of importance, the Triumph and the Katahdin. Potatoes when dug should be picked up and placed in field crates and then taken to central points on the farm, or to loading sheds where they can be washed, graded, sacked, and loaded. Care should be exercised during all of these operations so that the potatoes will not be bruised. During hot weather or following rains, it is important that the potatoes after being washed be dried with fans to remove the excess moisture. Precooling is disadvantageous under such climatic conditions and will help prevent bruised potatoes from breaking down and will insure the potatoes arriving on the market fresh, crisp and ready for the most discriminating housewife.

Where precooling is done about 1500 pounds of ice are used in each bunker of the car and the same type of equipment used in precooling strawberries has proven satisfactory. At the completion of the precooling process the bunkers are left closed until the train leaves when the plugs are removed and the hatch covers are opened at an angle of about 35 degrees. The motion of the train will then cause a normal circulation of the outside air through the car and will assist in holding a relatively low temperature without the necessity of adding additional ice. Where so handled the cars can be billed out as dry cars and at a proportionately lower rate than where ice is used in the bunkers during transit.

SWEET POTATOES

The Porto Rico is the only variety of sweet potatoes now shipped from Louisiana; and our 50-pound wire bound crates (James crates) of quality stock bring a premium of from 15c to 40c per crate in practically all of the markets.

We ship sweet potatoes all the year round, with the early potatoes moving during July, August, and September. The main harvesting period is during October and November. Fresh shipments have always been heavy at this time; and during those same months the potatoes are stored for shipment later during the winter and spring months. Fresh shipments are not recommended during October and November, however, for during that period Virginia, New Jersey and other Atlantic seaboard states are shipping their potatoes and they sell at a much lower price, thus depressing our own market.

During the summer and fall months, the fresh stock is washed as it is dug so as to insure a clean attractive product. During later months the potatoes are dusted as they are packed from storage.

Sweet potatoes should be hand graded as they are picked up in the fields and all culls eliminated. After being placed carefully into field crates they should not be handled again until graded for shipment when they are graded to meet U. S. Fancy, U. S. Extra No. 1 or U. S. No. 1. Culls make good stock fare and should not be sold. The U. S. No. 2 can be sacked or crated and sold to the trucks for sale in nearby markets.

Irish potatoes should be picked up immediately behind the digging plow so that they will not sunscald. Potatoes should be handled carefully to prevent bruising.