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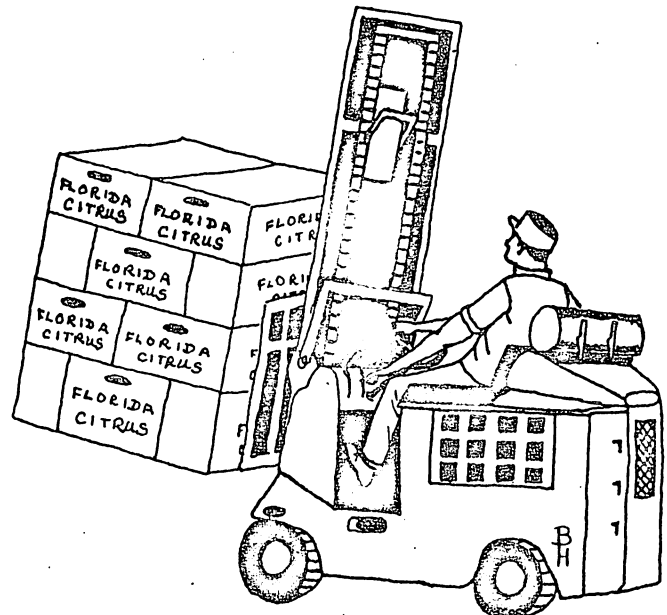
Packinghouse Newsletter

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

and

STATE OF FLORIDA, DEPARTMENT OF CITRUS

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Harvesting and Handling Section

P A C K I N G H O U S E

N E W S L E T T E R

PERISHABLES HANDLING CONFERENCE, JANUARY 9-11, 1972

Origin and Scope.--The Perishables Handling Conference held on the University of Florida campus, Gainesville, was the first, but probably not the last, such conference. The meeting culminated several years of discussion and planning including a preliminary meeting in September, 1970, of an Industry Advisory Committee of packers, transporters, and receivers.

The conference was national in scope, with 168 registrants from 22 states, Canada, and the Netherlands. Commodity group meetings (Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, Flowers & Foliage Plants, Frozen Foods, and Meats & Poultry) were interspersed with general sessions. Vigorous discussion from the floor was the rule in both general and commodity sessions.

Main Problems.--Any problem associated with fruits and vegetables involves factors from seed (planting) to feed (use), but we concentrated on those primarily associated with packaging, transportation, warehousing, and distribution. Caryle Sherwin, Vice President, Grand Union Company, through excellent slides and an outstanding presentation, illustrated some difficulties relating to containers and labeling. A carton is usually covered with large colorful letters and pictures advertising the packer and his brand, while it very often lacks a legible indication of the contents, e.g., variety, size, and count or weight. Mr. Sherwin pointed out that the supermarket delivery trucks are loaded in the dark early hours of the morning. The warehousemen and drivers often cannot determine what is in a carton in order to make the proper store deliveries.

A second handicap to Mr. Sherwin and all other receivers is the lack of standardization of containers, not only within citrus, but across all produce. A carton that packs well, ships well, holds up well and uses warehouse cubic space to good advantage can still be a headache if it does not stack well on a standard 48" x 40" grocery pallet alone or when mixed with containers of apples, carrots, peaches, beans, potatoes, tomatoes, and yes, even grapes and watermelons. This is the type of mixed pallet that goes out to individual stores.

The question of how to maintain good quality in all produce was frequently discussed. Generally, we know what needs to be accomplished, but are unable to follow through and do the job. Cartons are over-filled (specifically mentioned as a problem in citrus). Thermostats are set too low or too high or not at all. Delays detrimental to quality occur in packing, shipping, and unloading. Necessary precooling is sometimes inadequate or nonexistent. Good quality is good for everyone--grower, shipper, carrier, receiver, and consumer. The problem that was not solved at the conference is who will pay for improved methods that benefit everyone. The obvious answer, that everyone who benefits should contribute to the investment and ultimately the consumer will pay more for consistent and better quality, was not reached. Perhaps some small cooperative projects among shipper,

carrier, and receiver will ultimately grow into large cooperative projects where the costs of supplying larger volumes of better quality produce can be shared.

Value of the Conference.--The participants gave a vote of confidence by organizing another industry planning committee to establish a second Perishables Handling Conference. We do not know now when or where the conference will meet, but our advice to citrus shippers is GO! You can gain a great deal of information and you will use (not lose) only a few days.

Many of those attending sat down for the first time in the same room and discussed mutual problems. Many people were surprised to find that numerous difficulties in handling grapefruit, beef, and frozen foods are identical. But one question was heard too often--Where are your citrus shippers?

Further Information.--A proceedings including formal presentations and much of the floor discussion is being prepared. Registered participants will receive a copy of the proceedings. For others, it will be for sale and will be listed as available in Packinghouse Newsletter.

W. Wardowski
Extension Service
W. Grierson
Horticulturist

PACKINGHOUSE DAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1972

The Eleventh Annual Packinghouse Day is scheduled Wednesday, September 27, 1972, at the Agricultural Research & Education Center, Lake Alfred. Suggested speakers and/or topics are welcome at this time as the program is now being planned. The Packinghouse Newsletter will supply additional details in a later issue. Mark your calendar now to reserve the whole day, Wednesday, September 27, 1972.

Editor

TROPICAL REGION, ASHS MEETING

Lima, Peru is the site for the 20th Annual Meeting of the Tropical Region, American Society for Horticultural Science, August 13-19, 1972.

Now is the time to indicate your intentions to attend and submit titles of proposed papers. A preliminary registration form may be requested from:

Dr. T. T. Hatton, Jr.
USDA/MQRD
2120 Camden Road
Orlando, Florida 32803

Editor

SECRETARY OF COMMERCE RECOMMENDS U. S. GO METRIC

The Secretary of Commerce recently transmitted to Congress the Report of the U.S. Metric Study, which was conducted over a 3-year period by the National Bureau of Standards. The essence of the Report, which is titled A Metric America, is that the United States should convert to the metric system through a government-backed, coordinated national program over a 10-year period.

The Secretary of Commerce agreed with the conclusion of the Report that the U.S. should convert to the metric system, and recommended:

- That the United States change to the International Metric System deliberately and carefully;
- That this be done through a coordinated national program;
- That the Congress assign the responsibility for guiding the change, and anticipating the kinds of special problems described in the report, to a central coordinating body responsive to all sectors of our society;
- That within this guiding framework, detailed plans and timetables be worked out by these sectors themselves;
- That early priority be given to educating every American schoolchild and the public at large to think in metric terms;
- That immediate steps be taken by the Congress to foster U.S. participation in international standards activities;
- That in order to encourage efficiency and minimize the overall costs society, the general rule should be that any changeover costs shall "lie where they fall";
- That the Congress, after deciding on a plan for the nation, establish a target date ten years ahead, by which time the U.S. will have become predominantly, though not exclusively, metric;
- That there be a firm government commitment to this goal.

PPMA Report
September 1, 1971

AVAILABLE PUBLICATIONS

Available from Dr. W. Wardowski, Harvesting & Handling Section, Agricultural Research and Education Center, P. O. Box 1088, Lake Alfred, Florida 33850.

"Tangerine Handling" by W. Grierson, A. A. McCornack, and F. W. Hayward. Ext. Circ. 285. May, 1965.

"Practical Measures for Control of Stem-end Rind Breakdown of Oranges" by A. A. McCornack and W. Grierson. Ext. Circ. 286. May, 1965.

The following were presentations at the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables commodity workshop, Perishables Handling Conference, Gainesville, January 9-11, 1972. The listed costs cover Xerox charges.

"Decay Control in Delivering Perishables" by Dr. Louis Beraha, Pathologist, USDA, Chicago, Ill.\$.70.

"Harvesting, Preparation and Packaging Fruits" by Dr. W. Grierson, Professor of Fruit Crops, University of Florida, Lake Alfred, Fla.\$.60.

"Equipment and Facilities for Handling and Precooling Vegetables" by Mr. R. K. Showalter, Professor of Vegetable Crops, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.\$.50.

"Refrigeration Systems and Loading Patterns" by Mr. W. F. Goddard, Engineer, USDA, Orlando, Fla.\$1.00.