

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
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RECORD-LARGE MARCH 1 STOCKS OF MERCHANTABLE
POTATOES THIS YEAR 1/

March 1 stocks of merchantable potatoes held by growers and local dealers in or near the areas where produced were the largest of record for that date, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics announced today. Combined grower and dealer stocks of 87,690,000 bushels on March 1, 1950, were 24 percent larger than holdings of a year earlier and 17 percent larger than the previous record of 75,230,000 bushels remaining on March 1, 1947 from the record-large crop harvested in 1946. Potatoes held for use as food, seed or livestock feed on farms where grown and those purchased by the Government under the price support program but released to the grower are not included in the estimates of merchantable stocks. Also, deductions have been made for shrinkage and waste expected after March 1.

Purchases by the Government under the price support program were increased during the past month with livestock feed providing the principal disposal outlet for such potatoes. In Maine, there has been some export business and starch factories have handled a large volume of surplus potatoes during the past two months. However, stocks in that State were the largest of record for March 1 and accounted for 42 percent of the U.S. total.

In the East, March 1 stocks were about two fifths larger than holdings on that date of the past two years. In the central part of the country, potato supplies are large in each of the surplus late States except South Dakota. In that State, it was dry during the growing season and the crop was short. In the West, grower and dealer holdings on March 1 were 6 percent smaller than the unusually large holdings of March 1, 1949. Reduced holdings in Idaho are largely responsible for the smaller stocks in the West this year.

For the 37 late and intermediate States, marketings during January and February 1950 amounted to 57,750,000 bushels, compared with marketings of 65,260,000 bushels during the comparable months of 1949. Included in these quantities are Government purchases of about 14 and a third million bushels in January and February of this year and slightly more than 19 million bushels during the first two months of 1949. During the last two months total movement of old-crop potatoes in carlot quantities by rail and boat, including Government purchases moved in this manner, amounted to 26,890,000 bushels or 47 percent of total marketings. In January and February 1949, 34,914,000 bushels, or 53 percent of the quantity marketed, moved in carlot amounts by rail or boat.

1/ This special report of merchantable potato stocks is made possible under funds provided by the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

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