



AGRICULTURAL MARKETING IN INDIA

Report on the COLD STORAGE AND TRANSPORT OF PERISHABLE PRODUCE IN DELHI.

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FOREWORD.

Perishable commodities show the greatest possible seasonal fluctuation in supply and prices. Adequate provision of facilities for the cold storage of such commodities, *e.g.*, fruits, vegetables, eggs, fish, meat, etc., forms an essential feature of a proper system of distribution, inasmuch as it ensures controlled marketing, rational distribution and the elimination of waste. The need for proper cold storage arrangements is particularly felt in tropical countries like India. The Royal Commission on Agriculture reported in the following terms :—

“ Cold storage is in other countries playing such a remarkable part in the marketing of goods, both for export and for internal consumption, with results so generally profitable to the private enterprise undertaking the arrangements as well as to the farmer that we do not doubt that sooner or later there will be a similar development in India.”

Following on the above report, the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research have, for the last few years, arranged for experiments being conducted at Poona, particularly with reference to fruits. A study has been made of the temperature and humidity conditions under which different fruits should be stored and of the commercial storage life of different varieties of fruit. Experiments in ‘ Gas ’ storage and experimental shipment of mangoes to other countries are included in the experimental programme.

The subject had also been receiving active consideration of the Army authorities in India and they have recently decided to embark on a comprehensive scheme which envisages opening of cold storage depots in several places, *viz.*, Wana, Manzai, Bannu, Razmak, Mari Indus, Kohat, Thal, Quetta, Peshawar, Nowshera, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Ferozepore, Lahore, Jullundur, Multan and Ambala. It is expected that these depots would be available for use on the 1st April 1938. The capacity of these depots allows for considerable space for civil use also. It is also proposed to open similar depots at other places, *e.g.*, Meerut, Agra, Muttra, Bareilly, Cawnpore, Jhansi and Lucknow. It is intended that these depots should cater for the requirements of both military and commercial interests. It is also understood that a cold storage depot would be operating in Delhi before the end of 1937. Necessary arrangements in this behalf have been

contracted for, and a company—The Cold Storage Co., Ltd.—has been floated for the purpose. The company proposes, among other things, to demonstrate the possibilities arising from cold storage facilities by trading in cold storage commodities, so long as the installations are not fully utilised by the trade.

The Defence Department have also been experimenting with the question of refrigerated transport and have had three types of vans under examination for railway transport and two types for road transport. It is anticipated that information with regard to the former will be available for issue to interested parties before the end of this year (1937). For the latter (road transport) they have particularly visualised for their cold storage traffic, an insulated van free of all mechanical contrivances or other delicate equipment. Vehicles of this type should appeal strongly to civilian users, as two bodies could be built for one chassis, one body could be of the insulated type and the other of the normal load-carrying type, the bodies being changed according to seasonal traffic. At the conclusion of the 1937 experiments, the Army authorities would be prepared to place the results of the tests at the disposal of the interested parties.

A special officer was added temporarily to the staff of the Agricultural Marketing Adviser to study the working of cold stores, ice factories and distribution of perishable produce, etc. The present report is the result of a short investigation made recently in Delhi Province to study the existing methods of storage and transport of perishable agricultural produce. Seasonal supplies and prices are examined with a view to showing the economic possibilities of applying improved methods of cold storage on a more extensive scale to some of the more important commodities. Although the study is very limited in its scope it is hoped that it may be of assistance to those interested in the development of systematic cold storage in this country.

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