Gentlemen:

This is the time of year that Florida vegetable producers are planning their fall, winter and spring vegetable plantings. To assist in making decisions on what crops, acreages and production should be shot for, we take all available information and compile it in a report "Vegetables Outlook and Acreage Marketing Guides for 1959-60 Season" which is enclosed for those of you that have not already received a copy.

I would like to give some narrative explanation of the tabular and charted information in this report as interpreted by Dr. F. S. Jamison.

BEANS, Lima: Last season 2,100 acres were harvested. Prices received were fair to good, some consumers still prefer quality fresh limas and will pay a premium over frozen beans to get them. The small, thick-seeded types are gaining in acceptance and are easy to grow. It appears growers could secure satisfactory prices for slightly greater production than the quantity marketed last year.

BEANS, Bush and Pole: In 1958-59, 1,679,000 hundred weights were produced on 53,100 acres harvested. This was considerably below the previous five year average. Fall production was above average and prices were below average for fall and winter but prices were above average for spring. A production of 1,940,000 hundred weights of good quality beans could be sold at satisfactory prices. With normal losses and average yields, about 62,600 acres should produce the suggested quantity. The committee suggests this be split into about 20,200 acres in the fall, 22,000 acres in winter and 20,400 acres in spring. This would be a decrease in fall plantings and an increase in winter and spring plantings. Pole bean producers should recognize that in many markets, pole beans will not substitute for bush beans. When a grower has a good processing outlet as well as fresh, one of the dual purpose bush beans should be considered for part of the acreage.

CABBAGE: Last season 2,700,000 hundred weights were produced with growers receiving only production costs. A production of 2,800,000 hundred weights should be moved at favorable prices. This is below the five year average of 3,070,000 hundred weights. About 15,500 planted acres should produce this quantity. This would be 3,500 acres below the acreage planted last season. Growers should take advantage of reduced transportation costs from heavy rail car loading allowed for this area. Closer attention to quality packing through uniform sizing, grading and packaging will also help meet competition.

CANTALOUPE: A variety capable of producing high quality fruit under adverse climatic conditions is still needed. Under normal weather, newer varieties will produce satisfactory quality. Growers could market more quality melons than have been produced recently. Plantings of 2,400 acres in the more favorable locations should supply the market needs.
CAULIFLOWER: Acreage of this crop was below average during the past season. Prices for good cauliflower were satisfactory. An increase in production of this crop could probably be disposed of at favorable prices. It should be recognized by growers that the crop is difficult to grow and they should not attempt to grow it unless prepared to furnish the care needed. Usually there is no satisfactory market for low quality cauliflower.

CELERY: A production of 4,528,000 hundred weights, the largest crop ever produced, met with poor prices throughout the season. A reduction to 3,850,000 hundred weights produced with good scheduling of planting and good quality should bring satisfactory prices. This amount should be produced on about 9,800 acres, compared to 13,800 acres planted last season, a reduction in winter plantings to about 5,800 acres and about 3,950 acres in the spring.

SWEET CORN: Production was high, 3,038,000 hundred weights, and prices remained fair through the season. It would appear desirable to limit production to no more than last season. With good distribution of plantings and harvest, production from 7,700 acres in the fall, 9,100 acres in winter and 26,500 acres in the spring should be marketed at satisfactory prices. This would be about 43,300 acres total which is less than the 51,200 acres planted last season.

CUCUMBERS: The crop was short and prices were fair to good last year. The 1,370,000 hundred weights produced was below the five year average of 1,593,000 hundred weights. A slightly higher production than last year is suggested, 1,520,000. This production with average yields and abandonment could be secured from about 18,200 acres which is an increase of about 1,800 acres over last season. A slight increase in acreage to about 5,900 acres is suggested for fall, a large increase, about 2,900 acres for winter and about 9,400 acres for spring is suggested.

EGGPLANT: Prices for this crop were low during the fall and fair for the rest of the season. Production for the year was near the five year average production (310,000 hundred weights as compared to the average 319,000 hundred weights). Production of 80,000 hundred weights in the fall, 100,000 hundred weights in winter and 100,000 hundred weights in the spring probably would furnish ample supplies. To produce these quantities would require planting about 850 acres in the fall, about 750 acres in winter and about 830 acres in the spring for a total of 2,430 acres, assuming average yields and normal loss of acreage. This would be considerably less than the 3,100 acres planted last season.

ENDIVE AND ESCAROLE: The production and demand for this crop continues to increase. Last season 770,000 hundred weights were marketed as compared to an average of 593,000 hundred weights for the five year average. Prices for last season's crop were below average. For the coming year a production of 700,000 hundred weights should furnish ample supplies at reasonable prices. To secure this production would require planting about 6,400 acres. This would be a sizeable reduction from the 7,500 planted last year.

LETTUCE: Many growers continue to produce iceberg or crisphead lettuce. This type of lettuce is difficult to produce under Florida climatic conditions. Large losses occur from premature seeding or bolting and various diseases. Recently introduced varieties with considerable resistance to bolting have alleviated part of the trouble. There apparently is an increasing market for Romaine, Boston and other types of lettuce more suitable for production in
Florida. Growers interested in lettuce production should explore feasibility of producing these types. Last season 4,200 acres of lettuce were planted but only 3,200 acres of this was harvested. Probably 4,600 acres of planted acreage would, with average yield and more normal crop abandonment, furnish ample supplies of lettuce to meet demand of markets open to Florida grown lettuce.

**PEPPERS:** Prices were fair to good through most of the season. Probably these prices resulted from the relatively short production 876,000 hundred weights compared to 1,044,000 hundred weights average production from 1952-53 to 1956-57. Only during the fall months was production above average. A production of 1,150,000 hundred weights could probably be marketed at reasonable prices providing the production is properly distributed between fall, winter and spring. This production, assuming normal yield and abandonment, would require planting 16,425 acres as compared to 17,000 planted last season. Of this acreage probably 2,000 should be for fall production, 5,700 for winter and 8,700 for spring. This would mean planting 600 more for fall, 300 less in the winter and 120 more in the spring than were planted last season.

**POTATOES:** Prices have been low for several seasons in a row, this has been influenced by large quantities of good quality stored potatoes on the market at reasonable prices during the Florida harvesting season. The winter and spring acreage were the smallest for several years with below average yields both seasons. Stored stocks from late fall harvesting areas will continue to compete. It appears more potatoes could be marketed from Florida than last season. A production of 5,600,000 hundred weights is suggested. With normal yields this amount should be produced on about 12,300 planted acres for winter and 24,000 planted acres for spring.

**SQUASH:** Growers, except for early fall and late spring, found a ready demand for this crop at satisfactory prices. It would appear desirable to produce approximately 575,000 hundred weights during the coming season. To produce this quantity, it is suggested that approximately 3,600 be planted in the fall, 4,100 in the winter and 4,400 in the spring.

**STRAWBERRIES:** For many growers the past season was a disastrous one even though prices were fair to good. Excessive rains and late frost shortened the harvest so that even the prevalence of good prices during the harvesting period did not result in a profitable season. The season did show that consumers are quite willing and anxious to buy fresh berries. Probably more berries could be sold at favorable prices than were produced last season. Growers who have necessary labor for harvesting probably could profitably increase their acreage. New production techniques, when used, will possibly materially increase the yield of berries and decrease labor requirements for production.

**TOMATOES:** Tomato prices were fair to good over the season except for early fall and late spring (June), for good quality fruit. However, growers in a number of areas including the important Dade county area, experienced difficulty in producing fruits of desirable size and quality. Production of 4,745,000 hundred weights was below the five year average of 5,369,000 hundred weights and was, with the exception of last year's disastrous crop, the smallest one produced since 1952-53. It is believed that 5,300,000 hundred weights of quality tomatoes could be sold at satisfactory prices providing growers continue to do a good job of scheduling plantings to avoid heavy overlapping of crops. The quantity indicated for production could, with average yields and normal
abandonment, be produced on about 59,900 planted acres. This would be decidedly more than the 47,800 acres planted last year but less than the average acreage 62,180 planted from 1952-53 to 1956-57. The plantings for fall should probably increase only slightly from 12,100 to about 13,700, for winter an increase from 18,700 to 22,500 and in the spring an increase from 17,000 to 23,700.

**WATERMELONS:** Record prices have been received for most of this year's production, however, prices towards the end of the season were unsatisfactory. Several factors contributed to the good prices. Due to the low prices of 1957-58 and the wet spring of 1959, planted acreage was severely curtailed from that of the previous season, 78,000 as compared to 100,000. Loss of acreage from cold and wet weather further reduced this acreage to 75,000 for harvesting. Heavy rain resulted in excessive leaching of plant nutrients and consequently size of melons was in many instances seriously reduced. There was little competition between production areas within the state; south Florida crop matured well ahead of central and north Florida.

Probably more melons could be marketed than were sold this season. A production of 7,200,000 hundred weights of good quality melons could probably be marketed at satisfactory prices if distribution of harvesting were as well spaced as this past year. This production would be below the average 7,663,000 hundred weights produced from 1952-53 to 1956-57 but approximately the same as the average marketed during this period.

To produce the indicated number would require planting 92,300 acres assuming average yields and normal loss of acreage occurred. This would compare with 99,400 acres, the average planted from 1952-53 to 1956-57.

**MISCELLANEOUS CROPS:** There are many important crops grown by Florida growers on which there is but little reported information available as to yields, acreages or prices. Among these crops are radishes, okra, southernpeas, leafy vegetables such as turnips, mustard, spinach, Chinese cabbage and dandelion, broccoli, green onions and many others. Many of these crops should be grown on a sizeable acreage only after a market outlet is established. There is a very definite demand for many of these crops and prices of many have been at levels that would indicate additional amounts may be profitably produced.

I hope these interpretations will be of assistance to you in what should be ahead for the 1959-60 vegetable season.

Sincerely yours,

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