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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, October 28, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "SHOPPING FOR APPLES." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

In these United States we raise enough apples every year to supply every man, woman and child with more than a bushel each year. And since babies don't eat their share, the rest of us have that much more. Some 40 percent of our whole apple crop -- or something like 65 million bushels of the apples prospects for this year -- grow on home apple trees for use at home. Most people who live on farms have their own apple trees and know their apples. But most of the millions of people in cities buy their apples. To supply their wants, a great apple-growing industry has developed.

The industry began in western New York about the middle of the last century. Now almost every State produces apples for market, but the biggest producing region is the Pacific Coast and Western Mountain States, with the State of Washington growing a fifth of the entire commercial crop. In the North Atlantic States, New York is the leader. It produces one-eighth of the United States crop, so is second only to Washington. The South Atlantic States, including the Potomac-Cumberland-Shenandoah region with Virginia leading, come third. In the North Central States, Michigan, Ohio and Illinois top the list. In the South Central States, Kentucky, Tennessee and Arkansas run nip and tuck for the lead.

In spite of all these different apple regions, the trade generally classifies all apples as either "western" or "eastern." The Pacific and Mountain States make up the so-called "box-apple region," because they ship "western" apples all over the country, mostly in bushel-boxes, each apple wrapped in oiled paper. Fruit stands sell many of these apples. The leading Western varieties are: the Winesap, Jonathan, Delicious, Yellow Newtown, Rome Beauty, and an early apple, the Gravenstein.

Eastern apples come from anywhere east of Colorado. They go to central and eastern markets chiefly in bushel baskets and in barrels, though New England nowadays is using boxes largely. You'll find these eastern apples packed in shredded oil paper for protection against an apple disease known as scald, and also against bruises.

By the way, a man connected with the big eastern produce markets tells me that the color of this shredded packing paper has a good deal to do with the sales of the apples. This is the old story of appeal to the eye of the buyer. He says paper of some colors makes the fruit look especially attractive; other colors do just the contrary. Oddly enough, purple paper seems to set off both

red and green apples, so you'll notice that it is used a great deal nowadays. For Greenings and other apples with greenish skins, green paper makes a good background, but this color is never successful with red apples.

But let's get back to eastern apples again and mention some of the leading varieties. From the North Atlantic apple region, 4 varieties stand at the top of the list -- Baldwin, McIntosh, Rhode Island Greening, and Stayman Winesap. From the North Central region the 4 that take the lead are -- Jonathan, Delicious, Winesap, and Rome Beauty. From the Potomac-Cumberland-Shenandoah country the 5 favorites are -- York-Imperial, Grimes-Golden, Stayman-Winesap, Winesap, and Delicious. Finally, from the South Central States those that rank as "tops" are: Jonathan, Ben Davis, Delicious and Winesap.

You may be wondering whether apples get grades for market as so many foods do nowadays. Apples are graded for the wholesale market -- generally by Department-of-Agriculture standards, except in the Western region, where most of the States have set up their own grades for boxed apples. Grading depends on freedom from blemishes or defects, and the amount of color in the red or striped varieties. Packages of apples, whether they are baskets, barrels, or boxes, usually have the grade, size and variety of the apples they contain stamped on them. The quality of an apple, whatever the variety, depends both on the growing and the handling after it comes off the tree -- that is, packing, storing and shipping.

In some cities, red or bright colored apples are the best sellers. In other places the yellow kinds are popular. But taken the country over and judging by the quantities sold, market preferences run to Winesap first, then Jonathan, Baldwin, Rome Beauty and Delicious -- all red apples. Yet many people will rate the Yellow Newtown and the Grimes Golden with any red apple on the market. For cooking apples, the York Imperial and the Rhode Island Greening are eastern favorites, with the Rome Beauty considered a prize "baker", and the Baldwin, Jonathan, both kinds of Winesaps, Grimes Golden and Yellow Newtown all ranking as good general-purpose apples.

You see, when you're choosing apples for cooking, you need to consider not only quality but also variety. Different kinds of apples are suited for different ways of cooking.

Proper cooking counts a good deal in results, too. The foods people at the Bureau of Home Economics believe in cooking apples with as little water as possible and never cooking them too long. They also advise mild seasoning, so you won't cover up the natural fine flavor of the apple. Late in the winter when apples have lost some of their flavor, then is time enough to use spice and lemon and so on as seasoning.

By the way, let's settle one apple argument before we say good-bye. Housekeepers often differ as to what apples sauce is and how to make it. The Bureau of Home Economics makes a distinction between stewed apples and apple sauce. They say, for stewed apples, you want a kind of apple that holds its shape in cooking. Cut it in sections or slices and cook in sirup until the pieces are clear, tender, but still whole. But for apple sauce, you want a kind of apple that cooks up easily. Sauce is sauce to the Bureau of Home Economics -- and apple sauce is smooth, soft, and semi-liquid. To make it, peel and remove stem ends from apples. Put them in a covered kettle with very little water, and cook in their own steam until just soft. Put through a colander. Sweeten the sauce after cooking but while still hot. Add a few grains of salt to develop flavor.