

PEACH CULTURE IN CALIFORNIA

E. L. OVERHOLSER¹ AND W. P. DURUZ²

K
Pfeilsich / 2

CONDITIONS AND PROSPECTS OF THE PEACH INDUSTRY:

California produces all of the dried peaches and practically all of the canning peaches in the United States. Only a small part of the nation's supply of fresh peaches, however, is produced in this state. The clingstone varieties are used primarily for canning, while the freestone varieties are used primarily for drying and fresh consumption.

Clingstones.—During the past several years there has been a pronounced downward trend in the prices paid to growers for clingstone peaches. The average price in 1927 and 1928 was \$21 a ton as against an average of \$46 a ton in 1921 and 1922. The chief reason for this decline in price was the enormous increase in the canned pack which has doubled in the last eight years. Evidently, consumers would not buy as many canned peaches except at lower prices.

Because of the very short crop of peaches, as well as of competing fruits in 1929, the price rose to \$70 a ton. It should not be assumed, however, that similar short crops or high prices will prevail on the average during the coming years. Unless many trees are removed or the orchards are much neglected the peak of production is not likely to be reached until 1931 or 1932. At that time it is probable that the trend of production will be about 15 per cent higher than in 1928.

Until the present time, the increase in the total pack of canned peaches has been retarded by the steady decline in the quantity of freestones canned. An average of 1,714,000 cases of freestones were canned in the years 1919–1921, but only 321,000 cases in 1927, and only 164,000 in 1928. Evidently only a small further decline in the freestone pack can be expected, and in some years, as in 1929, it may even be expanded.

Exports of canned peaches have kept pace with the increase in the pack. On the average, about 15 per cent of our pack is exported. Our most important markets for canned peaches are the United Kingdom, Canada, Cuba, and France.

Freestones.—As contrasted with the rapid increase in the production of clingstone peaches during the past seven years our production

¹ E. L. Overholser, Associate Professor of Pomology and Associate Pomologist in the Experiment Station, resigned.

² W. P. Duruz, Assistant Pomologist in the Experiment Station, resigned.

³ The discussion on economic aspects is taken largely from: Wellman, H. R. The 1930 agricultural outlook for California. California Agr. Ext. Cir. 39:12–15. 1930.