

based on shipments of 33,476 lots of celery via railroad, totaling 3,185,009 crates. This represents 59 percent of the 5,410,000 crates harvested during the 1945 season. Since the total truck movement is unknown, it is estimated that the sample includes about two-thirds of the rail shipments of Florida celery.

Records of sales were coded for 80-column punch cards as they were copied in the field. They indicated destination of shipment by state and town, each of which was assigned a code number. Sales records also indicated month and day of shipment and month and day of sale. If the sale covered more than one day, as in the case of many consigned sales, only the date of the first sale was recorded. In addition, the sales record revealed the type of celery, the grade, the label used, the basis of sale, the kind of protective shipping tariff used, the size of celery in each lot, the number of crates and the price at which sold.

F.O.B.¹⁰ sales are quoted plus 10 cents for precooling. Prices reported throughout this study for F.O.B. sales therefore are plus 10 cents. Consigned, delivered and price arrival sales were all converted to an equivalent F.O.B. price. Office calculations and field transcriptions were checked for accuracy by multiplying the number of crates for each lot times the computed F.O.B. price, adding up the lots in the car, and checking the resulting figure against the total net returns recorded in the car-lot sales jackets.¹¹ Office checking revealed errors on about 5 percent of the records. These records were returned to the field for correction. In a limited number of cases, the cross-multiplying and adding uncovered errors in the original sales jackets which resulted in the filing of claims by the shipper concerned.

The punch-cards were punched and verified directly from the field records. After the cards were punched they were processed through an International Business Machine multiplier, which calculated the price of the number of crates and automatically punched the resulting total value in the card. During analysis, a column was added to the card by means of "gang punching" to facilitate the sorting of the cards.

Both collection and coding of sales information in this manner was relatively inexpensive. This system lends itself to rapid analysis and reveals a wealth of marketing information.

¹⁰ For definitions of various bases of sale, see Appendix A.

¹¹ For definition of terms, see Appendix A.