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A Science Service Forecast

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FORECASTING LEMONADE WEATHER

In summer America's consumption of lemons varies with the temperature. A hot spell in the East creates a demand for lemon juice that soon exhausts the stock of the fruit carried by nearby dealers. The California packing houses nearly always have plenty of lemons in storage, but it takes about 10 days to send a carload across the continent, and a hot spell is likely to be over within a week. It would obviously be to the advantage of the growers if they could get a few days' advance notice of abnormally hot weather in the East, and timely shipments of lemons would likewise benefit the consumer by keeping down the prices.

The U.S. Weather Bureau is sometimes able to supply such information. This was the case in 1928, when the California lemon crop was unusually large. June was cool in the eastern states but, says F.C. Young:

"On June 27 the San Francisco forecaster advised the marketing agency at Los Angeles that temperatures above the seasonal average were to be expected east of the Mississippi within a few days. On that date about 700 cars of lemons were on track in the East or en route. The market was declining and it had been decided to reduce shipments from California until it showed signs of improvement.

"On receipt of the forecast, shipments were continued without reduction. The effect of the hot wave was reflected almost immediately in the lemon market. On July 5, 184 cars of lemons were sold by the California Fruit Growers' Exchange; the largest sales on any one day in the history of that organization. The net return on these 184 cars of fruit was \$315,000. If shipments had been curtailed, as had been planned, less fruit would have been available for sale and the price to the consumer would have been much higher."

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