FLORIDA ORANGE PRODUCTION MAY DOUBLE WITHIN TEN YEARS

The Florida Citrus Industry is on the threshold of rapidly expanding orange production in the years ahead since total commercial orange acreage in Florida is now about 750,000 acres of which nearly 30% is considered non-bearing, or under 5 years of age. The harvesting season that is now rapidly concluding will see approximately 104 million boxes of oranges picked, 40½ million boxes less than the previous season's record breaking orange crop of 144½ million boxes. According to a projection made by the Florida Crop & Livestock Reporting Service last November, Florida's orange production could reach as high as 190 million boxes by 1971–72, and as high as 230 million boxes by the 1976–1977 season. Even though these estimates are on the high side, it seems almost a certainty that we will produce 200 million boxes of oranges within 10 years' time. Chart #1 shows the high and low orange production predictions made by the Crop Reporting Service for 5 year intervals based on the orange trees that are already in the ground. Therefore, the entire Florida Citrus Industry is busily engaged in long range planning in order to develop ways not only to increase consumption and demand for Florida citrus fruit and products, but to help the industry to better manage its supplies from season to season in order to keep citrus growing profitable in the future.

THE FLORIDA CITRUS INDUSTRY HAS AN ALL-OUT CAMPAIGN TO EXPAND EXPORTS

While the Florida Citrus Industry is working on a number of important proposals to increase domestic consumption of citrus, one of the most important projects is to increase the sales of our fresh and processed products in export markets, primarily Canada and European markets. However, because of the rapidly rising citrus production in many foreign countries shows in Table #1 attached, competition for the major foreign consuming markets has been intense and Florida has never been able to export more than about 3% of its citrus crop.

During the 1966–67 record crop year, the industry joined hands in a "three-party" program with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service and distributors of Florida citrus abroad in a cooperative promotional effort to market citrus fruit and products in Europe. The initial results were so exciting that during the 1967–68 season over $700,000 was spent by the Florida Citrus Commission in these "three-party" programs. For next season the Florida Citrus Commission has budgeted nearly $1 million as their share in promoting our citrus products overseas. These "three-party" plans involve 9 European countries and are primarily centered on developing consumer interest in concentrated and chilled citrus juices from Florida. The Florida Citrus Industry is deeply grateful to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and its assistance in developing these European programs that will help the Florida Citrus Industy to export more of its citrus crops in the future which will contribute importantly to a more favorable balance of trade for the United States. It is hoped that in a few years we can be exporting either in fresh form or processed products at least 10–15% of our total orange crop.

IMPORT TARIFFS ON FOREIGN CITRUS MUST BE MAINTAINED

The announcement last year that citrus import tariffs were virtually unchanged following the Kennedy Round of Tariff and Trade Conferences in Geneva was warmly greeted by every citrus grower in Florida and throughout the United States. I appeared before the Trade Information Committee and the U.S. Tariff Commission in Washington on December 17 and 18, 1963 to testify that any reduction in import duties on foreign citrus would spell economic disaster for the Florida citrus grower. With citrus production rising rapidly in so many foreign countries, and with their costs of producing citrus and marketing substantially lower than ours because of the low labor costs, and further because most foreign citrus producing countries export more than ½ of their citrus crop, the United States would be a prime market for these low cost producers if the tariffs were lowered. As a result, most citrus fruit and products were placed on the "exceptions list" because of its over-riding national interest. The necessity for retaining these citrus import duties are extremely important today in light of the rapidly increasing production that is forecast for the future