

**Columbia Basin Herald**  
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**Potato men vote on marketing agreement**  
**Sunday last day to act on referendum**

Grant County's 155 potato growers, along with some 1,200 others throughout Washington were deciding this week on a proposed marketing agreement under which they could control the sale of surplus crops and maintain steadier prices.

Growers throughout the state were balloting by mail in a referendum conducted by Portland headquarters of the production and marketing administration, a federal department of agriculture agency. Ballots are to be in the mail and postmarked no later than Sunday, Aug. 21, the deadline for voting.

Similar agreements already are in effect in 70 percent of the late potato producing areas of the nation, according to Karl I. Goodrich of Moses Lake, president of the Washington State Potato Growers Association. The Association has been instrumental in working up the marketing proposal and is recommending to its members that they vote in favor of it.

**Federally approved**

Growers failing to receive ballots may obtain them, with a copy of the proposed agreement from the county extension agent in the courthouse or the county agricultural conservation association office in the city hall, both in Ephrata.

The department of agriculture already has announced its approval of the program which, to become effective, must have the approval of at least two thirds of the growers voting or by producers of two-thirds of the state crop.

The marketing order would regulate the handling of Irish potatoes grown in the state, when prices paid to growers were below parity, by authorizing the use of grade and size regulations. Minimum standards of quality also could be established by the state potato industry.

**10-man committee**

The agreement would be administered by the secretary of agriculture through an administrative committee of 10 growers and five dealers. Members of this committee, who would serve three-year terms, would be nominated by the growers and dealers themselves and appointed by the secretary. The agreement stipulates that any regulations would be put in effect by the secretary only after they are recommended by this committee.

The program would be financed by assessments levied on dealers, not growers. The assessments, which would be established by the administrative committee, would be on the basis of carloads or truckloads.

Fred L. Ramsey of Yakima, secretary-manager of the state growers' association, pointed out in a bulletin to its members that the price support laws give the secretary of agriculture the right to withdraw price support from an area that does not put the marketing agreement into effect.

“The secretary made such an announcement last spring in regard to price support on potatoes,” he said, “and it is now believed that the early potato producing district in Kern County, California, will be without support in 1950 for that reason.”

**In effect elsewhere**

Idaho and eastern Oregon operate under a marketing agreement, Ramsey reported, and their 1948 size regulation was a two-inch minimum. Central Oregon and northern California are under such an agreement, as are the four northern central states. Maine put a marketing agreement into effect in 1948.

Washington growers have about 26,000 acres in potatoes, 4,500 of them in Grant County.

In giving his opinion on the proposal, Goodrich declared:

“The more the potato grower grows, the less money he gets. The department of agriculture, over the last few years, has gotten together figures which prove this beyond a doubt. These figures show that if farmers of the United States produce 450,000,000 bushels of potatoes that are paid \$396,000,000 for them. If they grow 400 million bushels they get \$512,000,000. If they produce 350 million bushels, which is just enough to supply the country, they realize \$598,000,000. And if they grow 300 million bushels, 50 million less than enough, they get \$625,000,000.”