

UN Organizations: I-V
1946-52

Shank

UNITED NATIONS
RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

1344 CONNECTICUT AVENUE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

6 March 1947

Mrs. F.D. Roosevelt
29 Washington Square West
New York 11, New York

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Please find attached our reply to a letter that Mrs. Bunt sent to your office on the 24th of January regarding the distribution of U.S. surplus of white fresh potatoes.

Thanking you for your kindness in referring the above mentioned communication to us, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

Karl Borders

Karl Borders, Chief
Bureau of Supply

Attachment

U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

RECEIVED
MAY 11 1947
BETHEL AND BEHAVIOR
FILED

Mrs. Ida Bunt
Box 598
Sunnyside
Washington

Dear Mrs. Bunt:

Mrs. F.D. Roosevelt has been kind enough to send to this Administration your letter of 24 January 1947 regarding the distribution of U.S. surplus of white fresh potatoes. When your letter reached us on February 4, we were already in the midst of negotiations with the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding the purchase of a substantial quantity of these surplus potatoes, a fact that made us delay a reply until we were able to inform you as to the outcome of those negotiations.

Being a relief organization concerned with the problem of getting enough food to millions of people suffering the results of the last war, we in the WFRRA have at all times felt that, in a world still ridden with shortages of every kind, no exportable surplus of foodstuffs should be allowed to deteriorate for lack of consumers.

Early in September of last year, after preliminary negotiations with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Administration decided to procure through that Department some 100,000,000 pounds of dehydrated potatoes. Our choice for the dehydrated product was based on the fact that shipping space with proper refrigerating facilities were not available, and the transportation of raw potatoes across the seas under any other conditions was still regarded as a substantial hazard. It is a fact that at that time and even before some shipments of fresh potatoes had taken place with fair success, but this operation was still looked upon as a chance which both the supplier and the shipper had to take.

Regarding the dehydrated potatoes, WFRRA was not in a position to pay the price requested by the Department of Agriculture which was approximately 30¢ per pound. Such an expenditure of our relief funds could hardly be justified since the Administration was able to buy wheat which affords about the same caloric content as a pound of dehydrated potatoes, at a cost of only four or five cents per pound. As a result, we had no other alternative but to cancel our requisition for the purchase of these potatoes in dehydrated form.

Since then, other shipments of fresh potatoes have been completed with fair results. This fact, plus our willingness to take advantage of any surplus of foodstuffs, has made it possible for us now to arrange with the Department of Agriculture for the procurement of a fairly substantial

Dept. of Agriculture
Washington, D.C.
Mrs. F.D. Roosevelt
Box 238
Wash. D.C.

Mrs. Bunt

- Page 2 -

quantity of fresh white potatoes which we are planning to ship to Europe from Searsport, Maine. The quantity involved in this recent purchase is slightly over 46,000,000 pounds and it will meet the immediate requirements of the UNRRA recipient countries. The near exhaustion of the UNRRA funds prevents us from increasing that quantity, but it should be said that some of the European countries are already here buying U.S. potatoes and, therefore, we would not be surprised if even larger quantities of potatoes will be exported in the very near future to foreign areas which are in great need of this article.

Hoping to have given satisfactory answers to the questions raised in your letter of 24 January, and thanking you for your interest in the problem, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Karl Borders, Chief
Bureau of Supply

cc: Mrs. F.D. Roosevelt

MLima:ea
28 February 1947

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

February 18, 1947

*Send for statement to
Mrs. Roosevelt*

*Send statement to
woman who
asked*

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
Apartment Six A
29 Washington Square West
New York 11, New York

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

This is in reply to your letter of February 7 to the Secretary of Agriculture enclosing a letter from Miss Ida Egan Bunt, Box 598, Sunnyside, Washington regarding the disposition of potatoes acquired under the price support program.

There are enclosed two copies of a statement on this matter which presents the major reasons for the apparent inappropriate and ill-advised waste of potatoes in this country while critical food shortages still exist in many other countries.

Sincerely yours,

G. R. Grange

G. R. Grange
Potato Division

Enclosures-3

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OPY

A. P. BUNT
Sunnyside, Washington

January 24, 1947

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

We live in a small town in the heart of one of the richest valleys in the United States. A new irrigation project has just been completed last year, and thousands of bushels of potatoes were raised in this new land. The price broke just after harvesting time, and many farmers stored their potatoes, hoping to receive more for them in the spring.

Now the Government has advised these farmers to "dump" all that do not come up to the finest grades, and even the top grades are drugging the market, and the thought occurs to the ladies of the valley that inasmuch as Europe is hungry, and potatoes are very good to eat, that something might be thought of that will place these unwanted potatoes before those hungry people. This would be much better than to do with them as we saw done last fall. They were strewn over acres of ground, and great bulldozers run over them, mashing them to pulp. Cattle fed on them, and the remainder were used for fertilizer.

You are with the United Nations group, and inasmuch as we believe your heart is with the unfortunate of other lands, as well as your own land, we think that owing to your wonderful influence and close connections with the "Great" of this country, you could suggest a way to deal with this situation.

May we hear from you on this subject. I might add that the entire states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and California, and in fact, all the Pacific states, are overburdened with a surplus of potatoes that might save many lives.

Thanking you, I am

Yours most faithfully,

Ida Egan Bunt (signed)
Box 598, Sunnyside,
Washington



GENERAL
Y. P.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration

February 1947

Potato Export Situation

Every effort has been made to utilize the large 1946 potato surplus of about 95 million bushels without waste. In pre-war years when farmers produced a potato crop that exceeded the demand, there was a comparable amount of waste. This waste, although accompanied by low farm prices, was not widely publicized because the surplus potatoes were disposed of principally on the grower's farm by abandoning unharvested fields, dumping, and similar methods. Now that a price support program is in effect, the major purpose of which was to prevent heavy economic losses while farmers were readjusting war-time production to meet normal requirements, the Department is obligated to pay for and dispose of the surplus. This obligation was established in legislation enacted by Congress to support prices of certain agricultural commodities at not less than 90 percent of parity for the duration of the war and for a two-year period following the end of hostilities. If it were not for the price support program, the farm price of potatoes this year in many of the major production areas probably would have returned not more than one-third of the production costs. Farm acreage goals have been established which with normal yields should prevent similar overproduction from reoccurring in 1947.

Good quality potatoes for which a practical use can be found are not being dumped or otherwise wasted. However, potatoes are a perishable commodity and if no outlet can be found, they must be disposed of prior to rotting in storage. It is these deteriorating lots along with low grade and small size potatoes that are being dumped first. The abundant supply of good quality potatoes being held in storage is more than sufficient to meet both domestic and export demand.

In an effort to encourage the consumption of the surplus as food, potatoes purchased by the Department at the support price of about \$2.20 per hundredweight have been offered to the Army, foreign governments, and international organizations for relief feeding at the price of four cents per hundredweight f.o.b. shipping point. Relatively little interest has been evidenced in this offer because of the low food value per pound of fresh potatoes compared with grain, perishability, and high shipping costs. England and some other countries have restrictions prohibiting the importing of fresh potatoes if certain insects or diseases, common to the United States, are carried by the potatoes. So far, potatoes exported or contracted for export amount to about 5 million bushels primarily to Belgium, Italy, Spain, France, and Portugal.

Other foreign governments and UNRRA have not been willing to accept these offers of fresh potatoes because of the handling difficulties and costs. Nor have they seen fit to pay the cost of 15 to 20 cents a pound for dehydrating the potatoes when they can purchase wheat flour at 5 to 6 cents per pound. As an illustration of the comparative cost, fresh potatoes donated free of charge at a port in this country cost more than flour purchased at 6 cents a pound on the basis of food value per unit when delivered to an European port. Additional factors which must also be considered are the loss in transit on potatoes and the inadequate storage and handling facilities for a perishable commodity after delivery to many foreign countries.

From an objective viewpoint, the most satisfactory solution to the situation would be to eat more potatoes in this country and less of the foods that are suitable for shipment abroad. If only one more ounce of potatoes a day had been eaten by everyone in the United States, the resulting increase in consumption in terms of farm weight would have totaled over 70 million bushels. If these potatoes had been substituted for grains, sugar, and fats, there would have been little waste of potatoes this year, and the supply situation with respect to these other commodities would have been eased.

All food procured in this country for relief feeding purposes is paid for by the purchaser. However, the United States has helped to alleviate the famine conditions by making available large quantities of the basic foods, by appropriations to UNRRA or loans to individual countries, and by relief programs of philanthropic organizations. Since the Department has no funds to be used directly for foreign relief feeding purposes, its maximum contribution with respect to potatoes is to continue the present practice of offering them practically free of charge f.o.b. shipping point to such claimants.

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NORWICH UNION
FIRE INSURANCE
SOCIETY, LTD.
PACIFIC DEPARTMENT
SAN FRANCISCO

Office Phone 3363
Residence 4502

A. P. BUNT
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE
On Highway No. 410
SUNNYSIDE, WASHINGTON
January 24, 1947

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buy of low here
A.P. Bunt
head to*

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
New York,
N.Y.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

We live in a small town in the heart of one of the richest valleys in the United States. A new irrigation project has just been completed last year, and thousands of bushels of potatoes were raised in this new land. The price broke just after harvesting time, and many farmers stored their potatoes, hoping to receive more for them in the spring.

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You are with the United Nations groups, and inasmuch as we believe your heart is with the unfortunate of other lands, as well as your own land, we think that owing to your wonderful influence and close connections with the "great" of this country, you could suggest a way to deal with this situation.

May we hear from you on this subject. I might add that the entire states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and California, and in fact, all the Pacific States, are overburdened with a surplus of potatoes that might save many lives.

Thanking you, I am

Yours most faithfully
A. P. Bunt
Ida Egan Bunt,
Box 598, Sunnyside,
Washington.

April 1, 1947

My dear Mr. Morse:

I am sorry there has been such a delay in answering your letter of March 30d but I was away with Mrs. Roosevelt on the west coast.

Her transportation expenses amounted to \$44.00.

Very sincerely,

Secretary

U.N. Society of Canada

PATRON:
HIS EXCELLENCY FIELD MARSHAL THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE VISCOUNT ALEXANDER OF TUNIS, G.C.B.
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA

UNITED NATIONS SOCIETY IN CANADA

B. K. SANDWELL
157 VICE-PRÉS. AND CHM. NAT. EXEC.
G. E. BEAMENT
ADM. TREASURER

NATIONAL OFFICE
OTTAWA
TEL. 2-0507

DR. JAMES S. THOMSON
NATIONAL PRESIDENT
ERIC W. MORSE
NATIONAL SECRETARY

March 3, 1947.

Miss Malvina C. Thompson,
Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt,
Apt. 6a, 29 Washington Square West,
NEW YORK, U.S.A.

*OK
Jesse
5 11/1/47*

My dear Miss Thompson:

Mrs. Roosevelt's visit was an unqualified success and has had an excellent effect on "public relations" for U.N. in Canada - especially in Montreal. She gave so generously of her time and vitality, and the day turned out to be fairly strenuous, I am afraid. I do hope she has suffered no ill effects.

I believe that Dr. Thomson has written personally to Mrs. Roosevelt thanking her.

I hope that you will let me have the amount of the travelling expenses involved so that we can forward a cheque without delay.

Yours very sincerely,

E. Morse
National Secretary.

EWM:ks