The half dump for easier and better fruit packing

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The once popular "flat" is being superseded by

The Half-Dump

FOR EASIER AND BETTER FRUIT PACKING

By J. BLOOMFIELD, Senior Packing Instructor

ONE of the first cases used for the marketing of citrus fruit in Western Australia was the "flat bushel," which is similar in size to the "long bushel" used extensively for pears in Victoria. In a bulletin on fruit packing and the marketing and exporting of fruit issued in 1915, the flat box was illustrated and recommended as a suitable container for the local market. This case was superseded by the "dump" case when the Harvey area came into production about the beginning of World War I.

The "flat" was then later adopted for packing the smaller-sized citrus fruit, namely lemons and mandarins, and was also used extensively for stone fruit. Western Australia is the only State where the "flat" box is used. Since the early days it has been the general practice to pack lemons, mandarins and pears, as well as stone fruit and tomatoes for the local market, in the "flat." This box, because of its construction, may offer some protection to the softer and riper stone fruit and tomatoes, but this does not offset its many disadvantages in packing and handling generally.

For example, any fruit larger than 2½ in. will not pack satisfactorily because of the centre division and the narrowness of the box, which is only 6 in. wide.

All sizes of citrus and pears can be easily packed in the "half-dump," which makes this case a most suitable container for the local market. As evidence of the value of the "half-dump" for fruit packing, this box has been extensively used in this State for the export of tomatoes, pears and stone fruit, and for the large inter-State trade in Geraldton tomatoes.

During the past three seasons some of the leading fruit growers, after using the "flat" for many years, have found the change to the "half-dump" has been to their benefit. Any variety and size of fruit in the "half-dump" looks attractive to the buyer, whereas only the small sized fruit can be displayed satisfactorily in the "flat" case.

The "half-dump" is also much easier to pack than the double-sided flat case, which, when one end is filled, must be carefully turned to pack the other end without overbalancing the box in doing so. The same case-making bench can be used for "half-dumps" and "dumps" but the "flat" requires a different bench.

Also the middle partition of the flat case is liable to be off-centre adding to the difficulty in packing the two sides to the same height to avoid damage when lidding. Again, the same nailing-down press can be used for the "dump" and "half-dump," whereas a special arm is needed for the flat case. Where the "flat" case has to be dumped before nailing down, much damage can be done to the fruit, particularly as much second-class timber is generally used for the construction of these cases.

The stacking of the "half-dump" cases can be much easier when cross-stacked, as they occupy the same floor-space as the dumps, but the flat case, because of its
extra length, does not fit as well on the merchants limited floor space.

Somue buyers, especially the packers, still prefer the ¾ cases for lemons and mandarins and small-sized Bartlett pears, but many of the large metropolitan retailers have had good results with the fruit packed in "half-dumps."

The biggest changeover to the "half-dump" case has been in the marketing of pears, particularly when the fruit is packed out of cool store. The market for freshly-packed pears has been most encouraging and has proved to be the only practical method to handle pears for the late market.

Large sized Comice pears usually sell at premium prices and the use of the "half-dump" with corrugated cardboards has been proved to be the best case to protect the fruit. The skin of Comice pears is easily damaged and every care should be taken when handling this variety.

The Maida Vale citrus growers who specialise in the marketing of summer lemons now use the "half-dump" for all lemons and mandarins.

Early apples have also been marketed with success in the "half-dump" where supplies are limited to a few cases from a grower.

Although in many instances the "¾-flat" is a useful box, the "half-dump" will be used by more and more growers in the future for packing their fruit for the local market.

A revised packing chart has been compiled for the packing of lemons and mandarins in the "half-dump" cases and will be available from the District Instructors or the Department of Agriculture. Charts are also available for plums and tomatoes in half cases.

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**Aberdeen-Angus in the South-East**

Aberdeen-Angus cattle at the Esperance Plains Research Station. A commercial herd of Aberdeen-Angus cattle was commenced with 34 unmated heifers in May, 1957 and these were mated in June of that year to an Aberdeen-Angus bull. Research into growth rates and seasonal live weight changes is being carried out at the Station. The herd now totals 95 head.