



Department of  
Primary Industries and  
Regional Development

## Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Series 3

---

Volume 1  
Number 3 May-June 1952

Article 36

---

5-1952

### Potato-harvesting machines

Follow this and additional works at: [https://library.dpird.wa.gov.au/journal\\_agriculture3](https://library.dpird.wa.gov.au/journal_agriculture3)

 Part of the [Agronomy and Crop Sciences Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

(1952) "Potato-harvesting machines," *Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Series 3*: Vol. 1: No. 3, Article 36.  
Available at: [https://library.dpird.wa.gov.au/journal\\_agriculture3/vol1/iss3/36](https://library.dpird.wa.gov.au/journal_agriculture3/vol1/iss3/36)

This article is brought to you for free and open access by the Agriculture at Digital Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Series 3 by an authorized administrator of Digital Library. For more information, please contact [library@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:library@dpird.wa.gov.au).

# POTATO-HARVESTING MACHINES

**L**ESS than 15% of Australian potato-growers own mechanical diggers stated the Director General of Agriculture (Mr. Frank W. Bulcock) in replying to inquiries addressed to him by the West Australian Minister for Agriculture (Sir Charles Latham).

At present, said the Director-General, there are several types of Australian-made mechanical potato-diggers on the market, mainly tractor-drawn outfits driven by the power take-off. A few imported models of similar type are available.

Price ranges for these tractor-drawn machines run from about £120 to £380, and horse-drawn ground-wheel drive machines range from about £95 to £127 in price.

Two imported potato harvesters, one at £900 and one at £1,035 are now under test and will be tried out this year under varying conditions and in different types of soils.

Mr. Bulcock does not consider that potato-harvesting operations are likely to become much more highly mechanised in the near future and quotes the following reasons for his belief:—

- (a) The majority of growers handle relatively small areas of potatoes in conjunction with other farming activities and to many of them the capital cost of specialised potato equipment is sufficiently high to make its purchase a doubtful economic proposition.
- (b) These machines perform only a small part of the harvesting operation, viz., lifting the tubers to the surface. A considerable labour force is still required to pick up, grade and bag.

- (c) In many areas seasonal workers are paid the same rate per bag for picking up, grading and bagging as for *digging*, picking up, grading and bagging. In the circumstances some growers have used mechanical diggers at added cost to themselves.

- (d) Some makes are too light in construction and replacement parts difficult to obtain.

In conclusion, Mr. Bulcock writes:—

"I think the greatest single problem facing the potato growing industry today is a complex one related to agricultural economics, with the dominant factor being labour shortages. Farmers are obtaining satisfactory returns from other crops requiring a smaller labour force.

"Until a more suitable machine is proven, this Department is trying to facilitate an expended production of the elevator type digger which, of the machinery available, seems well suited to Australian requirements."

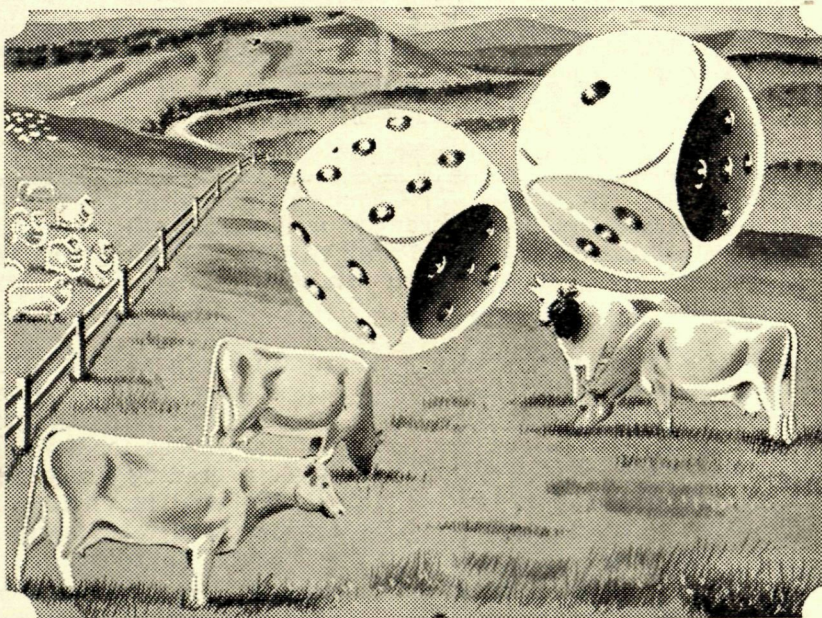
---

## HINTS FROM THE OUTBACK

**K**ERNELS from quandong and sandalwood nuts make good substitutes for hard-to-get almonds and walnuts, when the outback cook has to make cakes, puddings and lollies. Throw the shelled kernels into boiling water and boil for 15 minutes, then cut into quarters and use in place of other nuts in your favourite recipes. They are cheap and have a delicious flavour.

—COUNTRY COOK.





## DON'T GAMBLE ON YOUR PASTURE!

Why risk poor growth of feed when good pasture means so much in the production of wool, meat and milk?

Sow the highest grade seeds best suited to your climate and Soil. And remember that we can offer expert advice **FREE**, if you need it. Another point . . . Why risk not having your Seed on hand when you want it? Send us your order **TO-DAY!** Owing to possible shortage of some varieties you are recommended to have your order recorded without delay

**SOME SEASONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SPRING SOWING FROM OUR EXTENSIVE RANGE:—**

**SUDAN GRASS  
RED MAIZE  
RHODES GRASS  
N.Z. WHITE CLOVER  
LADINO WHITE CLOVER**

**SORGHUMS  
COW PEAS  
PERENNIAL RYE  
LUCERNE  
JAPANESE MILLET**

# Elder, Smith & Co., Limited

**SEEDS SECTION**