

CIRCULAR NO. 2.

# United States Department of Agriculture,

## SECTION OF FOREIGN MARKETS.

[Under the immediate supervision of the Secretary of Agriculture.]

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### AMERICAN DRIED APPLES IN THE GERMAN EMPIRE.

In a letter dated June 19, 1895, from the special representative of the Department of Agriculture in Germany, Mr. John Mattes, jr., the following was communicated to the Department:

At a recent trial before the court at Frankfort-on-the-Main the question was involved as to whether American dried apples, "ring apples," were impure and injurious to the health of the public and subject to seizure under the provisions of the German Pure Food law. The police authorities of that city a few months ago had seized a quantity of American dried apples from certain grocers of Frankfort and adjacent places. At the trial Homeyer and Klingelhoffer, Government experts, testified that American dried apples were injurious to the health of the public, as they were sprinkled with a solution of acetate of zinc to give them a bright color and more inviting appearance. Apples so sprinkled with this solution brought on, in children, vomiting and diarrhea, and in adults indigestion and dyspepsia. The court decided that the dealers were not responsible for the impurity of the goods, and, inasmuch as they were unwholesome, they were ordered to be destroyed.

On several occasions I have reported to the Department that in many of the German cities American apples have been seized for like reasons by the police authorities, though I have been informed that American manufacturers do not sprinkle their dried apples with zinc solution, but that they are dried on zinc grates, and if zinc is found in American dried apples it must be from the zinc wires. Exporters of dried fruits should understand that it is immaterial how little zinc is found, the presence of a small amount warrants the confiscation of the goods. A few years ago the court in Berlin decided in a similar case that if a chemical analysis showed that dried apples or other goods of like character showed traces of zinc they must be confiscated, no matter how small the amount of zinc discovered, whether from sprinkling with a solution or from a wire grating upon which the apples have been dried.

If American manufacturers of dried fruits wish to dispose of their goods in Germany, or to increase a trade which is assuming large proportions, they should be careful not to dry the fruit on zinc grates, but should use grates made from cane, such as are used for the same purpose in German establishments.

In Bulletin No 2 of this Section on Germany as a market for American products, this Department called attention to the agitation in that country against American products, and published the results of an analysis made at the Cornell University Experiment Station (Bulletin No. 25, p. 153) of apples rejected by the German custom-house authorities, which showed the presence of .583 gram of zinc per kilogram (4 grains per pound) of apples, or about 1 part in 2,000; and it was stated that if this is the average amount present in the evaporated apples of commerce it is certain that no evil effects can result from their use.

The State Department in the Consular Reports for January, 1895, published the report of William Henry Robinson, United States consul at Hamburg, which contains a translation from the publications of the Imperial Sanitary Department of Germany for 1894, as follows:

“Frequent analyses have been recently made, which show that American apple rings contain a considerable quantity of zinc, which has been pronounced by medical experts as injurious to health. It is, perhaps, intentional on the parts of Americans to add zinc to them in order to give them a finer white color by drying them on tin plates, or by saturating them with a diluted solution of hydrochlorate of tin. As announced by the public chemical laboratory of Dr. B. Alexander Katz, the legal chemist, the examinations have not been completed which were authorized by the Imperial Government to be held at different places during the summer of 1894. Should it be proved sufficiently by these that the greater part of American apple rings contain demonstrable and often considerable quantities of zinc, the German manufacturers at last will be relieved of their dangerous American competition. The German wholesale merchants that deal chiefly in American apples seek to protect themselves by certificates of American chemists. It is to be hoped that in the future they will be required not to sell American apple rings which have not received a certificate of the absence of zinc from a German chemist.”

In the same series of reports—April, 1895,—William D. Wamer, United States consul at Cologne, states that the mayor of that city was “obliged to give strict warning against the sale and the eating of American dried apple slices, and to give notice to those offering them for sale that they will be proceeded against in accordance with the imperial law regulating the trade in food and food products.”

The consul also states that the law applies only to such American dried apples as have been dried on zinc netting and contain zinc, and not to those that have been dried on wooden racks; and that if American firms desire to hold on to this thriving American trade in the German markets they are advised to evaporate the apples only on wooden racks, and see to it that the apples so prepared are entirely free from zinc, as the merest trace of this ingredient would cause them to be objected to by the health officials.

There is no evidence at present obtainable that Americans add zinc or any solution containing zinc to evaporated fruits, while the Department of Agriculture has evidence that many shippers, in view of the attitude of the German authorities, ship only apples that have been evaporated on wooden trays, it being supposed that such slight traces of zinc as have been found may be derived from the coating of the galvanized-iron trays on which, in many cases, the apples are evaporated. The facts and reports quoted in this circular seem to indicate that the opposition to American evaporated apples partakes more of a commercial than of a sanitary character. It seems, therefore, that however infinitesimal the quantity of zinc may be, its mere presence will be sufficient, according to the German authorities, to insure their condemnation, and every condemnation will serve the purpose of injuring the reputation of our dried fruits among the German people. American exporters must bear in mind that it is only by carefully catering to the tastes and respecting even the prejudices of foreign consumers that foreign trade can be built up.

The Division of Chemistry of this Department is now engaged in the collection and strict examination of such dried fruits as are prepared by different manufacturers for export, and when the results of such chemical tests are obtained they will be duly published.

It is worthy of notice that Germany obtained from the United States during the calendar year 1894, dried fruits to the amount of 2,133.9 metric tons, or 4,704,439 pounds, the value of which was, approximately, \$180,000.

The purpose of the Section of Foreign Markets is to furnish information on the world's markets, with special reference to their demands for agricultural products. Bulletin No. 1, already issued, relates to Great Britain and Ireland. Bulletin No. 2 relates to Germany, and the accompanying circular is supplementary thereto. Bulletins Nos. 4 and 5, on Canada and the Netherlands, are now in press.

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- Bulletin No. 1.—Great Britain and Ireland.
- “ “ 2.—The German Empire.
- “ “ 3.—France.
- “ “ 4.—Canada.
- “ “ 5.—The Netherlands.
- “ “ 6.—Belgium.

The above publications may be obtained of the Superintendent of Documents, Union Building, Washington, D. C., upon the payment of the price affixed thereto, viz, 5 cents per copy.