Growers, GWS

Reach Agreement

DENVER (AP) — The Great Western Sugar Co. and growers of sugar beets in four states reached agreement Wednesday on a new three-year contract governing purchase by the company of the 1977-79 crops, a company spokesman said.

The contract includes a method of implementing a purity formula, under which the prices farmers receive for the beets would depend in part on the sugar content of the beets, as well as an agreement calling for the company and growers to share the cost of shipping the beets to Great Western plants, said company spokesman Claude Fleet.

In the past, growers were paid entirely on the basis of the gross weight of the beets.

Some "minor operational matters" remain to be worked out and individual growers still must sign the agreement before it goes into effect, Fleet said.

Great Western will also announce shortly the date at which normal off-season maintenance will resume at 11 Great Western plants, Fleet said. The firm had suspended those maintenance operations because of what it called uncertainties over this year's crop, he said.

The Mountain States Sugar Beet Growers Assn., one of the groups negotiating the agreement, represents about 3,000 growers in the four states — Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska and Kansas. It and the Nebraska Non-Stock Beet Growers Assn., another party to the agreement, together supply about 90 per cent of all beets delivered to Great Western.

A joint statement from the growers and the firm said they were confident the agreement "...provides the foundation for a stable, long term relationship."

The basic payment scale for the beets had already been determined and was not one of the topics in the three days of negotiations leading to the settlement, Fleet said.

The contract is based on one of the proposals presented by the growers, according to Lou Towater, president of the Nebraska Non-Stock Beet Growers Assn.

The contract uses a year-by-year, factory-by-factory diffusion juice purity average and sugar content average during the direct delivery period. This would derive a formula directly comparable to the 1960-66 base formula.

In as much as this is a diffusion juice formula it would differ from the 1960-66 formula in that a penalty or premium would be applied across the board to all growers, the agreement reads.

Under this proposal harvest purity will still be taken.

Some concessions were made by both sides in the negotiating of the freight portion of the contract, Towater said.

The contract as worked out keeps the purity committee intact. There will be a one-cent-a-ton payment from both the growers and the company as needed to continue the purity committee's work, he said.

The growers and the company will meet later to work out the duties of the committee.