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LOUISIANA FEED STAMPS

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The most unique feature of the Louisiana Feed Inspection stamps is the consistency with which Harry D. Wilson's signature has appeared on them as the Commissioner of Agriculture. The stamps were first issued in 1926 with his signature and every single stamp issued since then has had the same printed signature. --In addition, every "Insecticide or Fungicide" stamp has had this same signature! Most states have changed commissioners many times in the same period.

Another interesting, altho mystifying, fact is the evidence that the serial numbers were printed in two operations on nearly all of the stamps up to 1941. This is evidenced by the clearly visible difference in shade between some of the numbers on the stamps. Some numbers even appear to have been printed in as many as three operations! --This condition is shown on a 100 lb. 1935-36 stamps which we have. First it shows "37" in a bright red, then "699" in carmine (close to the shade of the stamp itself), and finally "79" in an orangish carmine. We have the same stamp with red orange serial numbers but with noticeably less orange in the last two numbers only. The early printings show less difference in shades of the serial number.

A new serial letter was used in front of the serial number each year beginning with "J" in 1926. What happened to "A" through "I" is anybody's guess! In 1943 "Z" was reached and the use of serial numbers discontinued thereafter. For some unknown reason, several values of the 1943 set got out without serial numbers. Our reference collection has the 10 lbs., 25 lbs., and 100 lbs. thus, but only the 100 lbs. has been seen also with the serial numbers!

The 2nd World War's effect on paper supplies is shown in the 1943 issue by the cheap grade of paper used for the 25 lbs. and 50 lbs. stamps. Both are on a very grey paper, typical of the period, while the other values are all printed on a good quality white paper. --In 1944 this poor quality paper was used for all values.

The original design was a very dull one, but never-the-less, it remained in use until 1943 when a beautiful engraving of Huey Long's state capitol building graced the stamps along with the state seal at the right. This is undoubtedly the most attractive of all state issued Feed stamps to date. Next in rank of attractiveness come California's, then Mississippi's, Florida's, and next Georgia's. Alabama's are not unattractive and require intense study to find all possible varieties.

Many state issued Feed stamps are a philatelists nightmare designwise, which makes them a really different and therefor interesting group to collect-- for those who like things that are 'different'. Usually, too, the quality of printing is very low as to centering etc., so it doesn't pay to be too particular when collecting them (as with many State issued stamps).

Louisiana's Feed stamps, however, stand out as the 'shining' example on all scores. Altho her early stamps were not very attractive, they stood out well against other State Feed stamps of the period.

We would like to see many more states use interesting and attractive designs on the stamps they issue for taxation, following Louisiana's example.