

Co-operation

Acting Together in Buying and Selling of Great Benefit to Farmers.

A. C. Briggs in Farmers Home Journal.

This is fast becoming a co-operative era. Through co-operation many things are accomplished which would be impossible if undertaken by an individual. We have co-operative stores, co-operative banks, mills, associations, shops and farms. We have had for a number of years poultry associations, but none of them have ever taken up the prevalent co-operative system.

New System Needed.

The urgent need of the present day is a plan to bring the producer and consumer nearer together and this may be brought about easiest and quickest through co-operation.

No industry is in greater need of this aid than the poultry business. The present system for handling the poultry and egg produce for market is a mixture of produce, retail, wholesale, jobber, etc., round-about dealing, when money could be made and saved at both ends of this system by proper co-operation of producer and consumer.

Experimenting With New Plan.

So far only one instance of this kind has gained any prominence. One enterprising poultryman in an Eastern city has established a co-operative system of egg farms, and the results derived have been very gratifying. Last year the net average price was forty-two cents a dozen.

The eggs are delivered in cartons, or boxes, containing one dozen, and guaranteed fresh and clean. If for any reason the contents are defective, the consumer knows just whom to blame, as the name and address of the one at fault is before him. All losses are made good. For this advantage he is paying less money for better goods than under the old system of buying from his city grocer, from a collection of market eggs that have been out of the henery for no one knows how long or under what conditions. They may have passed through half a dozen hands, and with no redress if they are half spoiled.

Under a co-operative system of selling, the producer sells direct to the consumer under guarantee of perfectly good food. The plan effectually eliminates the middle men or speculators.

Eggs En Route.

To illustrate the workings of our present egg market system, let's follow the eggs through the various changes that are ordinarily used in taking eggs from the farm to the home in the city.

First, the farmer usually depends upon selling his produce to the local grocery man. This is due to several reasons. One is he hasn't sufficient eggs to warrant shipping to a city commission man, and he doesn't know of a city consumer who will take his goods.

Second, his home grocer is handy and may call and receive the eggs at his door, exchanging trade for them at about ten to fifteen cents a dozen less than the prevailing price in the market in which they are to be disposed at wholesale. The eggs are held from one day to two weeks, and are usually stored in open boxes and tubs along side coal oil, decaying vegetables, meats, molasses, etc.

With the grocer an egg's an egg regardless of size, shape or condition. No count out for any that are wrong, nor nothing for extra big

white, or select eggs. They are finally sold to a city wholesaler for a profit of several cents more per dozen than was paid for them in trade. From the wholesaler they usually go to a jobber at a satisfactory profit, then to the retail grocer, from whom the city consumer buys them.

From this it is readily seen why eggs for which the producer gets fifteen cents per dozen costs the city consumer thirty to fifty cents a dozen, according to their condition, and the hands they go through, regardless of whether they are ten days or two months old at the time they are used.

After the above facts are realized by the city consumer do you believe he would buy another dozen eggs of his grocer if he could get them guaranteed strictly fresh from the farm, with name and address plainly printed on every package of eggs?

Community Co-operation.

It may be a long time before the direct selling plan is inaugurated generally, but in the meantime the people of any community can take the matter up and make the system highly successful.

In many ways community co-operation is preferable to general co-operation in that it is possible to have the details of the work conducted by those who are well known and of proven probity.

In every community there are a number of people who keep poultry, and if they know each other and can trust each other sufficiently to put their resources to some extent behind a plan to co-operate in the disposition of their produce, it would be a good and wise thing to do.

The whole foundation of such a plan must be based upon faith—faith in the honesty and integrity of those concerned.

In discussing co-operative work among dairymen, a woman with a touch of acid on her tongue, remarked that in all such undertakings there is always a liar and a hog among those who gather to discuss such a venture. Keep a lookout for such "cattle."

Advantages of Co-operation.

Buying supplies, feed, etc., together, selling produce together, there are many advantages to be derived. Buying in larger quantities means lower prices; selling together means wider markets and better prices.

Some time ago in a Government report, special mention was made of the increase of farmers' co-operative associations. Two important results were mentioned, viz., the shipping of a better grade of stuff and "the command, by the farmers, of a greater influence in the market."

This reference was to organizations in California covering fruits and other products; rice from Texas, cantaloupes from Tennessee, and various other products from different sections of the country.

If co-operation brings farmers "greater influence" in the marketing of those products, there is no reason why poultrymen may not profit by adopting the plan.

Maud—"Now, Auntie, be sure and have gas when you have your tooth taken out."

Auntie—"Never fear, Maud. I won't be left in the dark with any man!"

ALFALFA SEED PRODUCTION.

Commercial Aspects of This Crop—Farmers' Bulletin 495, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

In addition to the greater ease of marketing alfalfa seed than of marketing alfalfa hay, owing to its much less bulk for a given value, other important commercial aspects deserve consideration. Among these problems is that of suitably cleaning the seed so that it will command good prices when it reaches the distributing centers. The seed of any one community is usually bulked before shipping to the distributing centers, and unfortunately the grade of seed is often determined by the presence of a few poor lots of seed among those of higher grade. For this reason it is very important that the seed of any given section be reduced as nearly as possible to a uniform basis before entering the ordinary channels of trade. At present this is done to a certain extent by local merchants, some of whom install machines with which they clean the seed either before or after purchasing it from the individual farmer. It is suggested that a co-operative arrangement among different farmers might result in a more satisfactory solution of these somewhat difficult problems of hulling, cleaning, and marketing the seed. With co-operation once started it need not be confined to cleaning and marketing the seed crop to the best advantage, but might be extended to the undertaking of co-operative experiments on the individual farms to determine the best of several possible methods of handling the seed crop in their particular section. With a number of farmers trying different treatments on their fields, experience could be obtained in one season which would otherwise require a number of years to procure. This plan of co-operation could also be utilized in the establishment of some trade variety of seed. A premium could be commanded for such seed if it was of good quality, and especially if of a variety in strong demand in some particular section of the country. The extreme Northern seed-producing sections might take up the production of a hardy strain such as the Grimm alfalfa, an unusually hardy variety which has been grown for over fifty years in the severe winter climate of Minnesota. The demand for this variety will for years probably far exceed the supply. Farmers located in the southwestern part of the country with equal advantage might undertake the production of the Peruvian alfalfa seed, which is obtained only in very small quantities and with great difficulty in South America. When once established this variety produces satisfactory seed crops in the milder sections of California and Arizona. In the same manner farmers in the semi-arid sections could determine by preliminary experiments the most valuable strain for their sections of the country and could then develop this strain so that it would have a recognized superior value on the market. Since large quantities of seed are annually imported to meet the increasing demand it is probable that it will be some years before the home-grown supply will equal the demand.

The lowest price of the season usually prevails shortly after the hulling season is over. Better prices could be obtained if means were at hand for holding the seed until the desired price was secured. If a co-operative association were organized in a proper manner, each member could store his seed in the association's warehouse and, if desired, receive an advance of at least two-thirds the market value of his

seed in cash at a nominal rate of interest pending the time he decided to sell his seed.

This bulletin also gives the best methods of cultivation and should be in the library of every farmer who is interested in forage crops. Application to your Congressman will obtain it.

A teacher in one of our elementary schools had noticed a striking platonic friendship that existed between Tommy and little Mary, two of her pupils.

Tommy was a bright enough youngster, but he wasn't disposed to prosecute his studies with much energy, and his teacher saw that unless he stirred himself before the end of the year he wouldn't be promoted.

"You must study harder," she told him, "or else you won't pass. How would you like to stay back in this class another year and have little Mary go ahead of you?"

"Aw," said Tommy, "I guess there will be other little Marys."



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