

FARM CO-OPERATIVE SELLING

By GLENN G. HAYES

How Wool Growers Benefit by Organization.

"Wool is wool"; that is what the local buyers and commission firm representatives used to tell the wool growers as they traveled through the sheep sections buying the year's clip.

"Wool is wool and it's all worth about the same price per pound"—that was the comeback whenever an aggressive farmer was bold enough to ask for more money for his long-staple fleeces. The poorer grades set the price for a whole community. The best flockmasters grew discouraged and paid little attention to their fleeces. There was no incentive for doing otherwise—all wool brought about the same price.

Since the first New England loom began spinning cloth, wool marketing in the United States has been along speculative lines. No wonder the wool business is weighed down with speculative features. This is partly due to the fact that wool is such a variable product as to quality, shrinkage and condition and length of staple. Then, from the production standpoint wool is seasonal, while the demand is distributed over all twelve months of the year. This means that the wool must be carried by someone from the time of shearing until the time it is sold at the mill and that requires financing.

From the beginning of the weaving industry the mills bought their supplies from the Boston dealers. The dealers had local agents scattered over the country, who traveled among the farmers buying fleeces. These are the buyers who declared that "wool is wool"—they had never heard of grading, and if they had they wouldn't have favored buying that way. It was money in their pocket to put all fleeces in one great universal class and tab it "wool," the price being set on the basis of its poorest quality. In that early day farmers had heard little of the doctrine of co-operation. They took the price they were given, but they took it with a deal of grumbling among themselves.

Grumbling began to crystallize into action. From time to time revolts occurred against the old-line marketing system. But nothing much came of them; a burst of fury, a few years of determined action, with less than medium results, then back to the old system. It is only within recent years that the growers have had any actual influence in bettering their market prices.

First Action in 1874.

The first action taken against the old system was in 1874 when the Grangers in Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky established warehouses where they assembled wool and sold it in large quantities direct to the manufacturers. The gain was only temporary, for with the decline of the Grange the warehouses passed out of the growers' hands.

Three years later the Goodlettsville Lamb club at Goodlettsville, Tenn., was formed. Today it is the oldest existing co-operative marketing association in the United States. This club has pooled the lambs and wool of its members and sold them by grade during the 45 years of its existence.

Here and there both in the range states and in the corn belt the local pools were put into operation. These organizations were generally informal neighborhood groups of wool growers who had arranged to bring their wool together and sell it at the same time. Different methods of sale were tried. Sometimes the wool gathered was consigned to a wool commission merchant to be sold for the group, and sometimes the buyers were asked to come to the local plants. The main object of these local pools was to assemble a large enough quantity to make it worth while for buyers to come and bid on it. Sometimes it was done for convenience in consigning to a dealer at a central point—for there has been plenty of dissatisfaction with prices paid by local dealers.

The plan of organization was of the simplest. There was merely an agreement of a number of local growers to go together in handling their wool. Sometimes they elected officers, but more often they were represented by a committee who arranged the details of the plan. After a year or two many of these locals failed, but others came to take their places, and in 1917 there were at least 25 successful pools east of the Missouri river and three times as many in the range country. State-wide pools began about 1915 with the formation of the Ohio State pool.

Co-operative marketing of Ohio wool may be called a result of the war. During the war the government fixed a schedule on prices which it would pay for wool. Dealers all over Ohio made bids based on a profit of 7 to 10 cents per pound more than usual. This wide margin named was the turning point in the old-form marketing system of the state. In one body producers stood up for their rights.

How the Plan Works. In four weeks the Ohio Sheep and

Wool Growers' association had been formed and proceeded to collect 275,000 pounds of the 1918 wool clip. They sold it, too, at an average of 72 cents per pound. The dealers had offered only 60 cents. In 1921 one-third of the state's growers were backing the organization, 15,000 in all. That year a pool of 6,798,000 pounds, one-half of Ohio's clip, was sold.

The plan works something like this: During May and June the growers deliver their wool to a central place, although there is no contract binding them to deliver. (That perhaps is the greatest weakness of the Ohio pool.) The wool is then shipped to leased warehouses at Columbus or Wheeling, W. Va., for grading and storage. In addition to this association there is a warehousing company with about 2,000 stockholders. This company has a warehouse at South Columbus, where the wool may be assembled, graded and stored. A commission merchant is employed to direct the sales.

The wool is pooled by grade for the year and producers are paid the receipts, less the expenses. As soon as the wool is delivered the grower is paid 75 per cent of the value of the wool, which may be obtained on warehouse receipts. Between 1910 and 1921 this marketing plan saved the pooling farmers \$1,000,000 over dealers' bids.

The success of the Ohio pool, which is the largest in the United States, has led the growers in other corn-belt states to adopt a similar plan. In 1921 Michigan had the largest pool outside of Ohio with 2,586,000 pounds, and Iowa, Indiana and New York each pooled over 1,000,000 pounds. Other Middle West pools were in Illinois, South Dakota, Missouri, Kansas, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and West Virginia.

Most of the pooled clips of the Middle West are handled by the National Wool Warehouse and Storage company of Chicago, a company made up of 700 western sheep growers. The wool handled through the company is brought to the warehouse, where it is graded and stored until it can be sold for a reasonable price. This company will handle both wool pools and shipments on consignments from growers. It is not a co-operative, but it does furnish a good service in both grading and sales.

State pools collect the wool from the local pools and this is shipped by carload lots into the Chicago warehouse. The wool is graded by state pools and the growers are sent warehouse receipts. But the warehouse company does not make a sale until the association has given its approval. Usually the whole pool goes at one transaction. For this reason marketing specialists declare the plan lacking. To sell an entire year's clip at one time is not in line with good marketing ethics. Orderly marketing, toward which American farmers are striving, means supplying the market with the product as the product is needed.

In the Range States.

In the range states wool is the one big crop. Every pound must pay a just return. There are no other crops to fall back on. Yet the wool growers are reluctant about trying co-operative marketing. These ranchers are individualists. The range is cursed with the same problems that are prevalent in the corn belt. But it was with much hesitation and fear that the range growers came together to market co-operatively. They tried it first in 1905 in Fremont county, Idaho. The pool was a success, so much so that the growers of other states were more than merely interested. They began pooling with their neighbors. The movement spread slowly to Idaho, Oregon and Wyoming. Although the area covered by each pool was small, the pools frequently averaged 25,000 pounds.

Various plans of organization were tried. In the Idaho pool each grower signs a power-of-attorney to the pool manager, who takes the control and the pool is sold at a flat rate ungraded.

When pools of the corn belt began to meet with success there was a demand for larger pools in the West. In 1921 about 7,000,000 pounds was assembled in five large pools. Almost half of this was in the two Montana pools. It was in 1921 that the Pacific Co-operative Wool Growers was organized by the Oregon Farm Bureau federation. It started with 1,700 members who signed five-year contracts. This iron-clad contract is the chief difference between the Pacific Co-operative Wool Growers and the other western wool-marketing associations. It differs, too, in that it has a sales manager whose sole business is to sell wool instead of turning it over to a commission merchant. This policy is directly opposed to the dumping system of the Central West.

The wool is collected locally and sent to a bonded warehouse in Portland to be graded and sold. The price has averaged 7 cents a pound above that made by the outside bidders. Now the association has spread out into northern California, western Idaho, southern Washington and all of Oregon.

In the Southwest the mohair growers have organized for co-operative selling. They formed the Southwestern Farm Bureau Wool and Mohair Growers' association in June of 1921. It was formed under the direction of the Texas Farm Bureau on a plan similar to that used in Oregon. It is organized on a commodity basis like the wheat and cotton farmers' order contracts binding the grower to

deliver his wool over a certain number of years.

In spite of its mistakes and backward start co-operative wool marketing has brought with it many changes for the good of the sheep industry. In 1921 more than 22,000,000 pounds of wool, 10 per cent of the American clip, were pooled by the growers' organization. Growers' returns were increased \$1,013,000.

Co-operation in England

(Dearborn Independent)

This organization is called by various names, but for the purpose of these articles I have called it the Consumers' Co-operative organization, since, strictly speaking, its membership is really confined to consumers. It is the largest tea importer, mixer and distributor in the world, with an output of sixty million pounds a year. In fourscore years, it has emerged from its inception in a room in a small brick store in Toad Lane, Rochdale, near Manchester, England, to massive granite buildings that cover solid blocks of English cities.

On a rainy day in June, I stood on the other side of Toad Lane, and looked across to the humble place where the twenty-eight weavers in Rochdale, eighty years ago, set up an organization for purchasing the necessities of life in quantities, with the double purpose of securing the wholesale price and obtaining the unadulterated article for resale to their members. It is one of the leading shoe manufacturers in the United Kingdom as well as one of the largest single distributors of coal, having eliminated that troublesome question of the pyramiding of brokerage fees which is so pressing a question with us.

American Co-operation Grows

(St. Joseph Gazette)

More than two billion dollars' worth of business was done last year by organizations of American farmers.

It has long been said that the agriculturist is primarily a business man, but it is only of late that he has compelled recognition in this capacity by adopting the most up-to-date methods of business men in other lines.

Collectively he is the greatest of capitalists, also the greatest of producers. His weak point has been distribution. When he learns to distribute his products as manufacturers do, he will have his business built up on a rock.

The Biggest Wheel

(The Open Window)

The highest-head reaction turbine in the world has arrived in Portland and is now being installed in the power plant of the \$16,000,000 Oak Grove hydro-electric project of the Portland, Railway, Light and Power company.

This water wheel with accessories weighs approximately 100 tons and it took five flat cars to haul it from San Francisco, where it was designed and manufactured by the Pelton Water Wheel company.

It will be operated under an average effective head of 857 feet—the highest in the world.

The cost of the wheel with installation will be about \$100,000 and it has a capacity of 35,000 horsepower at 514 revolutions per minute.

Water will be turned into the turbine for the first time early this summer.

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LAWYER AND NOTARY

HALSEY, OREGON



In the Days of Poor Richard

By IRVING BACHELLER

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(Continued)

Mrs. Irons hid in the shed with the loaded guns.

Ruth Irons and the children set out for the sugar bush. The steers were quickly led up and slaughtered. As a hide ripper Solomon was a man of experience. The loins of one animal were cooking on turnips and a big pot of beef, onions and potatoes boiling over the fire when Jack arrived with the Bones family.

A little later Solomon left the fire. Both his eyes and his ear had caught "sign"—a clamor among the moose birds in the distant bush and a flock of pigeons flying from the west.

"Don't none o' ye stir till I come back," he said, as he turned into the trail. A few rods away he lay down with his ear to the ground and could distinctly hear the tramp of many feet approaching in the distance. He went on a little farther and presently concealed himself in the bushes close to the trail. He had not long to wait, for soon a red coat came on ahead of the party. He was a young Huron brave, his face painted black and yellow. His head was encircled by a snake skin. A fox's tail rose above his brow and dropped back on his crown. A birch-bark horn hung over his shoulder.

Solomon stepped out of the bushes after he had passed and said in the Huron tongue: "Welcome, my red brother; I hear that a large band o' yer folks is comin' and we have got a feast ready."

The young brave had been startled by the sudden appearance of Solomon, but the friendly words had reassured him.

"We are on a long journey," said the brave.

"And the flesh of a fat ox will help ye on yer way. Kin ye smell it?" "Brother, it is like the smell of the great village in the Happy Hunting Grounds," said the brave. "We have traveled three sleeps from the land of the long waters and have had only two porcupines and a small deer to eat. We are hungry."

"And we would smoke the calumet of peace with you," said Solomon.

They entered the house and barn and walked around them, and this, in effect, is what Solomon said to him:

"I am the chief scout of the Great Father. My word is like that of old Flame Tongue—your mighty chief. You and your people are on a bad errand. No good can come of it. You are far from your own country. A large force is now on your trail. If you rob or kill anyone you will be hung. We know your plans. A bad white chief has brought you here. He has a wooden leg with an iron ring around the bottom of it. He come down lake in a big boat with you. Night before last you stole two white women."

A look of fear and astonishment came upon the face of the Indian.

"You are a son of the Great Spirit!" he exclaimed.

"And I would keep yer feet out o' the snare. Let me be yer chief. We must have a horse and fifty beaver skins and be taken to the border and set free. I, the scout of the Great Father, have said it, and if it be not as I say, may I never see the Happy Hunting Grounds."

The brave answered: "My white brother has spoken well and he shall be my chief. I like not this journey. I shall bid them to the feast. They will eat and sleep like the gray wolf, for they are hungry and their feet are sore."

The brave put his horn to his mouth and uttered a wild cry that rang in the distant hills. Then arose a great whooping and kintecawing back in the bush. The young Huron went out to meet the band. Returning soon, he said to Solomon that his chief, the great Splitnose, would have words with him.

Turning to John Irons, Solomon said: "He's an outlaw chief. We must treat him like a king. I'll bring 'em in. You keep the meat a-sizzlin'!" The scout went with the brave to his chief and made a speech of welcome, after which the wily old Splitnose, in his wonderful headress of buckskin and eagle feathers, and his hand in war-paint, followed Solomon to the feast. Silently they fled out of the bush and sat on the grass around the fire. There were no captives among them—none at least of the white skin.

Solomon did not betray his disappointment. Not a word was spoken. He and John Irons and his son began removing the splits from the fire and putting more meat upon them and cutting the cooked roasts into large pieces and passing it on a big earthen

platter. The Indians eagerly seized the hot meat and began to devour it.

In a letter Solomon has thus described the incident: "It were a band o' cutthroat robbers an' runnygades from the Ohio country—Hurons, Algonks an' Mingoes an' all kinds o' cast-off red rubbish with an old Algonk chief o' the name o' Splitnose. They stuffed their hides with the meat till

they was stiff as a foundered hoss. By an' by they was only two that was up an' pawin' around in the stew pot fer 'nother bone, lookin' kind o' unsart'n an' jaw weary. In a minute they wiped their hands on their 'ar an' lay back fer rest. They was drunk with the meat, as drunk as a Chinese a'ter a pipe o' opium. We white men stretched out with the rest on 'em till we see they was all in the land o' nod. Then we riz an' set up a hustle. Hones we could 'a' killed 'em with a hammer an' done it delib'rit. I started to pull the young Huron out o' the bunch. He jumped up very supple. He wasn't asleep. He had knowed better than to swallow a yard o' meat."

"What was the wimmen? I knowed that a part o' the band would be back in the bush with them 'ere wimmen. I'd seed suthin' in the trail over by the drowned lands that looked kind o' neevarious. It were like the end o' a wooden leg with an iron ring at the bottom an' consid'able weight on it. An Injun wouldn't have a wooden leg, leastways not one with an iron ring at the butt. My ol' thinker had been chawin' that cud all day an' o' a sudden it come to me that a white man were runnin' the hull crew. That's how I gained ground with the red scout. I took him out in the aidge o' the bush an' sez I:

"'What's yer name?'" "Buckeye," sez he.

"'Who's the white man that's with ye?'"

"'Mike Harpe.'"

"'Are the white wimmen with him?'"

"'Yes.'"

"'How many Injuns?'"

"'Two.'"

"'What's yer signal o' victory?'"

"'The call o' the moose.'"

"'Now, Buckeye, you come with us, I sez.'"

"'I knowed that the white man were runnin' the hull party an' I itched to

jump on him 'fore he got holt o' the knife ag'in.

"'I thought sure he'd floor the boy an' me not quite loaded, but Jack were spry as a rat terrier. He dodged an' rushed in an' grabbed holt o' the club an' fetched the cuss a whack in the paunch with his bare fist, an' ol' Red Snout went down like a steer under the ax.

"'Look out! there's 'nother man comin'!" the young wimmen hollered.

"'She needn't 'a' tuk the trouble 'cause afore she spoke I were lookin' at him through the sight o' my ol' Marler, which I'd managed to git it loaded ag'in. He were runnin' towards me. He tuk jest one more step, if I don't make no mistake.

"'The ol' brute that Jack had knocked down quivered an' lay still a minit an' when he come to, we turned him around an' started him toward Canada an' tol' him to keep a-goin'!

"'When he were 'bout ten rods off, I put a bullet in his ol' wooden leg for to hurry him erlong. So the wust man-killer that ever trod dirt got erway from us with only a sore belly, we never knowin' who he were. I wish I'd 'a' killed the cuss, but as 'twere, we had consid'able trouble on our hands. Right erway we heard two guns go off over by the house. I knowed that our firin' had probly woke some o' the sleepers. We pounded the ground an' got thar as quick as we could. The two wimmen wa'n't fur behind. They didn't calculate to lose us—you hear to me. Two young braves had sprung up an' been told to lie down ag'in. But the English language ain't no help to an Injun under their surmancances. They don't understand it an' thar ain't no time when ignorance is more costly. They was some others awake, but they had learnt suthin'. They was keepin' quiet, an' I sez to 'em:

"'If ye lay still ye'll be safe. We won't do ye a bit o' harm. You've got in bad compny, but ye ain't done nothin' but steal a pair o' wimmen. If ye behave proper from now on, ye'll be sent hum.'

"'We didn't have no more trouble with them. I put one o' Boneses' boys on a hoss an' hustled him up the valley fer help. The wimmen captives was bawlin'. I tol' 'em to straighten out their faces an' go with Jack an' his father down to Fort Stanwix. They were kind o' leg weary an' excited, but they hadn't been hurt yet. Another day or two would 'a' fixed 'em. Jack an' his father an' mother tuk 'em back to the pasture, an' Jack run up to the barn fer ropes an' bridles. Under a little while they got some hoofs under 'em an' picked up the children an' toddled off. I went out in the bush to find Buckeye an' he were dead as the whale that swallowed Jonah."

So ends the letter of Solomon Binkus.

Jack Irons and his family and that of Peter Bones—the boys and girls riding two on a horse—with the captives fled down the Mohawk trail. It was a considerable cavalcade of twenty-one people and twenty-four horses and colts, the latter following.

Solomon Binkus and Peter Bones and his son Israel stood on guard until the boy John Bones returned with help from the upper valley. A dozen men and boys completed the disarming of the band and that evening set out with them on the south trail.

It is doubtful if this history would have been written but for an accidental and highly interesting circumstance. In the first party young Jack Irons rode a colt, just broken, with the girl captive, now happily released. The boy had helped everyone to get away; then there seemed to be no rideable horse for him. He walked for a distance by the stranger's mount as the latter was wild. The girl was silent for a time after the colt had settled down, now and then wiping tears from her eyes. By and by she asked:

"'May I lead the colt while you ride?'"

"'Oh, no, I am not tired.'" was his answer.

"'I want to do something for you.'"

"'Why?'"

