

Association Aids Livestock Marketing In Wallowa County

By GARNET D. BEST,
County Agent, Wallowa County.

Wallowa county lies at the extreme northeastern corner of the state of Oregon, and the only means of shipping out agricultural products is over the branch line of the Union Pacific which connects with the main line at La Grande, or by truck. You can see, from the standpoint of shipping out our products, we are somewhat isolated.

Prior to the organization of our marketing association, there were fifteen or twenty buyers covering Wallowa county in cars, buying cattle, sheep and hogs as cheaply as it was possible for them to do so. These buyers were always very anxious to buy livestock when the market was rising, but on a falling market it was almost impossible to get any offer from them.

With so many buyers in our limited territory, it was absolutely necessary that they have a very wide margin on which to operate because the volume of each purchaser was necessarily quite small. In many cases, it proved necessary for two or three men to pool the stock they had purchased in order to make a car load to Portland, or for one buyer to sell his purchases to another for shipment.

Many of these livestock buyers were more or less operating on a "shoe string," and if they guessed wrong on the selling market, bad checks often resulted. Sometimes these checks were later collected, and, in some cases, they never were.

Under the conditions as just outlined, it is easy to see that the small shippers were the ones particularly at the mercy of the local market and suffered much worse than if they themselves were able to ship stock in car lots. However, the car load shippers were also hurt to some extent because when livestock in small lots can be picked up at less than market prices, it tends to bear down on the price set at the terminal markets.

The matter of organizing an association had been discussed for some time in Wallowa county and finally came to a head early in 1928. At this time the Pomona grange appointed a committee to meet with N. C. Donaldson, at that time county agent of Wallowa county, to formulate plans for an association, the

purpose of the organization to handle the smaller shipments of the livestock grower who had to sell in less than carlots.

The association's first shipment of livestock was made on October 9, 1928.

The first annual meeting of the association was held December 22, 1928, and a board of seven livestock shippers was selected from seven different sections of the county to act as directors.

J. W. Miller of Enterprise was elected president and N. C. Donaldson, secretary-treasurer.

The first livestock shipments were assembled by the association directors and \$10 per car was allowed them for their expenses.

Later on, of course, it became necessary to hire a man at Joseph, one at Enterprise, and one covering the Wallowa and Lostine section, for assembling, weighing and shipping the stock.

At the annual meeting of directors, December 18, 1931, W. L. Teutsch, assistant county agent leader, explained the procedure and advantages of incorporating under the cooperative laws of Oregon. The association decided that this was a wise move and authorized the board of directors to draw up articles of association, formulate by-laws and file the necessary papers at Salem. This was done immediately.

At the present time, the membership fee is 50 cents for any bona-fide livestock producer in the county who ships with the association.

At no time has it been required that members sign a marketing agreement and members can sell through the association or outside, as they desire. As may be seen from this, the association depends for business upon its ability to give better service at less cost than its competitors.

Although charges have varied considerably, according to the shipping costs, price of feed, etc., those in use at the present time by the association are as follows:

- Cattle & Hogs—
- Association charge, 6c cwt.
- Insurance charge, 1c cwt.
- Sheep—
- Association charge, 7c head.
- Insurance charge, 1c head.
- All weighing is 25c per draft.

The association charge is used to help pay the men assembling, and for other miscellaneous association expenses.

The association owns its own truck and hauls livestock to the stockyards for members at cost. However, during seasons of heavy shipments the association hires additional trucks to haul the livestock of the members. Members may, at their option, deliver their livestock at the yards.

The average cost to the shipper to get his livestock to the stockyards in Portland is 75 cents per cwt.

When a man delivers livestock to the stockyards, it is weighed, given an individual shipper's mark with a pair of clippers, in case of cattle and hogs, or paint in the case of sheep, and is then run into pens to await loading in the cars.

In this way, the animals are sorted again when they reach Portland and each man's shipment is sold individually by the commission firm. Thus each shipper stands his own shrinkage and is paid according to the quality of the stock he ships.

The association ships on a special stock train which leaves early Saturday morning for Portland. Most of our livestock is sold by the various commission firms in North Portland, although sometimes a car load is sold to an outside purchaser who ships them himself. In the summer, the lambs are pooled and usually sold on the track to buyers who ship east.

Since organization the association, of course, has had its share of problems to be worked out in connection with shipping stock of so many owners in the same car and of keeping records straight on such shipments. George Gatlin, former extension ec-

Tax Experts to Aid Discussions at Meet

By C. D. CONRAD

County Agent, Morrow County

Claude Buchanan, president of the Oregon Taxpayers League; Chas. V. Gallaway of the State Tax Commission; and F. L. Phipps, executive secretary of the Association of Oregon Counties are among those who are expected to attend the Taxation, Legislation and Transportation committee meetings and furnish taxation information to the committee during the Wheat League conven-

tion according to Geo. N. Peck, general chairman of that committee. Others extended invitations include: Ormond Bean, Public Utilities Commissioner; F. H. Young, manager of the Oregon Business and Tax Research Bureau; Earl Snell, Secretary of State; and R. S. Kearns, of the Oregon-California Lands Administration.

onomist in marketing, and R. L. Clark of Portland were called upon and have given freely of their time and effort in helping to perfect a system whereby such shipments would be possible. One of the main problems the association has had to deal with, particularly in hog shipments, is variation of shrink. One man's hogs in a shipment may show a slight gain in weight between Wallowa county and Portland, while another man's hogs, in the same car, may show a rather heavy shrinkage. While this is largely due to type of feed prior to shipment and possibly some other complicated reasons, yet it has been impossible to give any definite recommendations which would control shrinkage.

Another problem was the loss due to death and crippling of animals enroute to market. The association has solved this problem by the insurance charge which it makes. It then pays the owner for his loss and puts in a claim to the railroad which partly reimburses the association.

We have found that it has been much easier to obtain improvements in stockyards and other facilities since the association was organized because the voice of the shippers is much more articulate through an association than were the voices of a thousand shippers individually.

The number of shippers and the net returns to the shippers, after all expenses were paid, since organization of the association are as follows:

1929—550 shippers.....	\$325,422.00
1930—823 shippers.....	473,270.00
1931—875 shippers.....	363,568.00
1932—580 shippers.....	200,259.00
1933—350 shippers.....	149,837.00
1934—444 shippers.....	195,294.00
1935—730 shippers.....	446,291.00
1936—770 shippers.....	559,835.00
1937—1025 shippers.....	667,434.00
1938—1025 shippers.....	567,943.00
1939—1025 shippers.....	547,086.19
1940—1025 shippers.....	525,444.52

(The 1933 net price is much lower because of the results of the depression.)

Important questions that will be considered by this committee will include taxation problems that might come before a special session of the Oregon Legislature if one is held.

Peck wishes to emphasize the information on taxation that farmers might pick up at this committee meeting rather than the resolutions to be made.

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