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Director of Information and Extension  
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# Cooperative Egg and Poultry Auction Associations.

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FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION

*Cooperative Research and Service Division*

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## Summary

**E**GG and poultry auction associations apparently fill a need for a new type of cooperative in the specialized and semicommercial egg- and poultry-producing areas adjacent to the large eastern consuming centers. A number of egg-marketing associations of the pool type had been formed in the East prior to the auctions and several of these are still operating, but the pool method of operation apparently has not appealed to producers generally.

The first cooperative egg auction was organized at Toms River, N. J., in May 1930. This action followed a 3-year study of the egg-marketing problems of the New Jersey poultrymen by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, assisted by the Agricultural Extension Service. As both management and producers were inexperienced, mistakes were made and this auction eventually proved unsuccessful. A second auction, which began operating at Flemington, N. J., in August 1930, was successful from the beginning.

From 1930 to 1937 inclusive, 25 similar auctions were organized in 8 of the Northeastern States. All were patterned directly or indirectly after the Flemington association. Three of these associations later found it advisable to abandon the auction method of sale entirely. The number of egg and poultry auction associations in operation at the end of 1937 in each State was as follows: New Jersey, 5; Pennsylvania, 5; New York, 3; Connecticut, 3; Massachusetts, 2; Ohio, 2; New Hampshire, 1; and Rhode Island, 1. Of these, 16 handled both eggs and poultry, while 6 handled eggs only.

All the auctions are relatively simple and independent local associations of poultry producers. All are incorporated in the State of location and all but one under a cooperative-marketing law. Only five associations are of the stock type. None use marketing agreements or contracts with members. Membership requirements are few; each member must be a poultry producer and pay entrance fees and annual dues. The dues usually amount to \$2 or less per year.

The services performed for the members by the association are few, consequently, operating methods are not complicated. Producers grade the eggs at the farm according to size, color, and cleanliness; poultry is graded according to class, breed, and weight. Delivery to the auction is either by the producer or by private truckers at the producer's expense. The producer also pays for the containers. The association inspects the eggs and poultry to determine the grade and to check on the producers' grading and packing. Each producer is assigned a number which is used to identify his product.

Eggs are, with few exceptions, inspected and sold by the association according to official State or Federal grade standards. Poultry is sold at most auctions on the basis of standards developed by the individual associations. Recently the New Jersey auctions have adopted the official State grades for live poultry.

Eggs are offered for sale at auction usually twice weekly; poultry sales are held once each week. Most buyers attend the auction sales personally, although considerable volumes of eggs are purchased through bids telephoned, telegraphed, or mailed to the auction manager prior to the sale. The association may use a protective or "stop" bid when demand is insufficient.

Handling charges, which cover all the services performed by the association—mainly inspecting and selling—range from 30 to 50 cents for a full case of eggs, graded by the producer. The most common charge is 45 cents. Small additional charges are made when grading by the association is necessary and in some instances for replacements and extra candling. The charge for handling poultry varies from 35 to 50 cents per crate.

Services other than handling and selling eggs and poultry are few. Several associations sell livestock at auction, while all auctions handle egg cases and poultry crates for members. The handling of poultry supplies has been unimportant but is increasing in volume.

Active membership in the 22 associations studied totaled over 13,000 on January 1, 1938, and ranged from 150 to 2,263 at individual auctions. This membership equaled 64 percent of the 20,464 members who were or had at some time been members. The original membership at each association averaged 44; at the beginning of 1938 the average auction membership was 594. For the auctions as a group, the membership has increased at an average yearly rate of 76 percent over the previous year.

In 1937 the 22 auctions marketed 947,210 cases of eggs and 172,314 crates of poultry by the auction method. The combined value of these products approximated 9½ million dollars.

Routemen, jobber-wholesalers, and chain stores furnished the principal outlets for auction eggs, purchasing about 75 percent of the volume. Routemen were the most important buyers, purchasing an average of 29 percent of all auction egg receipts. The combined purchases of retailers and jobber-wholesalers constituted 83 percent of all poultry handled.

Although grading standards used by the auctions are relatively similar, there is a wide variation in the percentage of eggs which are of top grade; the range for the associations was from 0 to 79.9 percent. Wide differences are found among auctions within a State using similar grade standards. During the last 4-year period, 1934-37,

seven auctions showed a decrease in the percentage of eggs of the top grade, four associations maintained the same percentage, and four showed an increase.

The auctions have maintained relatively low handling costs. In contrast with the far western producers, auction members in the East enjoy relatively low marketing costs through their association. Members of the eastern auctions usually pay less than 2 cents per dozen for marketing eggs, while producers from the west coast selling eggs in New York City through their cooperative associations pay nearly four times this amount.

The average income per unit of volume handled by 18 auctions in 1937 was 44 cents, while operating costs averaged 37.6 cents per unit. Principal factors affecting per unit costs were volume handled and operating methods and practices. Operating costs tend to decrease with increased volume, but some costs closely related to management and to the rendering of additional services have increased as the auctions have matured.

# Appendix A

## Marketing Rules of the Bucks County Producers' Cooperative Association

1. Any person using the market must agree to comply with the rules herein described, to obey the directions of the manager and not to interfere with the auctioneer or his assistants when they are working in line of their duties.

2. All eggs offered for sale on this market must be packed in 30-dozen standard egg cases in good condition, new or once used if possible.

3. Forestalling is positively prohibited, that is, no produce shall be sold privately on the market before or during the auction.

4. The buyer shall be given a reasonable opportunity to inspect and candle any eggs from any case which has not been sold.

5. Any difference of opinion regarding the sale of goods will be settled by the auctioneer.

6. All cases sold on the auction shall be labeled on each end with a label designated by the board of directors.

7. Auctions shall be held at auction building each Monday and Thursday at 1 p. m., daylight saving time when in operation, otherwise standard time.

8. All eggs offered for sale will be of Pennsylvania standard grades. They will be inspected by a certified state inspector and the respective grades designated on each case.

9. A single offering of eggs shall not exceed five cases.

### *Producers*

1. All persons offering eggs for sale on the market shall sell only in the manner designated by the directors or the manager. They shall agree to the fee charged for the market services and to the manner of collection of said fee as directed by the directors.

2. All persons other than members of the association, who wish to offer eggs for sale on the market must furnish proof to the satisfaction of the manager that they owned or operated a farm and that the eggs offered for sale were produced on said farm.

3. No person shall offer for sale on the market or grounds any other commodity than fresh eggs produced in Bucks County.

4. The market manager shall use his discretion as to the withdrawal of any eggs offered for sale.

5. The market will be open for receiving eggs from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m., daylight saving time, when in operation, otherwise standard time, daily except Mondays and Thursdays from 1 to 5 p. m., and Saturdays and Sundays.

6. In case the eggs are not sold and the producer has not left any instructions as to the disposal of them they will be disposed of by the manager at his discretion.

7. A handling charge of 40 cents per case shall be charged, and an additional charge of 50 cents per case for candling and grading.



*Buyers*

1. All eggs sold on the market are sold for cash or certified check, f. o. b. the market.

Buyers must agree—

(a) To bid in fair competition with all other buyers on the market.

(b) To offer their bids at the designated auction block at the call of the auctioneer.

(c) To settle all accounts between the market and purchaser in the manner prescribed by the directors.

2. All eggs purchased on the market must be moved before 5 p. m. of the day of the sale or between 8 a. m. and 12 a. m. on the day following. Eggs left at the market after purchased are at the purchaser's risk.

3. Any persons found violating any of these rules may be barred from the market for the purpose of buying or selling produce.

4. The directors of the association reserve the right to add, alter, or suspend any or all rules without notice to buyer or seller.

Below are samples of marketing agreements used by some auction associations during the first few months of operation:

Membership Agreement

I hereby agree to consign for sale to the Brockton Cooperative Egg Auction Association a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ cases of eggs per week for a period of at least \_\_\_\_\_ weeks after the opening of the auction. This agreement to be valid only when 50 members and 200 cases of eggs per week have been assured to said association, and provided this assurance is secured prior to September 1, 1932.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \* \* \*

Marketing Agreement \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to abide by the articles of incorporation, the bylaws, and the marketing rules of the Wooster Cooperative Poultry Association. I further agree to consign all of my eggs to the Wooster Cooperative Poultry Association for a period of at least 3 months beginning with the first auction.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

R. F. D. No. \_\_\_\_\_

P. O. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_ Twp. \_\_\_\_\_

Wooster Cooperative Poultry Association,

Date \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

**TABLE 20.—LOCATION OF EGG AND POULTRY AUCTION ASSOCIATIONS STUDIED, 1938**

Name of association	Post office	State
Flemington Auction Market Cooperative Association, Inc.	Flemington.....	New Jersey.
The Vineland & South Jersey Cooperative Egg Auction and Poultry Association, Inc.	Vineland.....	Do.
Burlington County Cooperative Poultry Auction Association, Inc.	Mount Holly....	Do.
Tri-County Cooperative Auction Market Association, Inc.	Hightstown.....	Do.
The North Jersey Cooperative Egg Auction Association, Inc.	Paterson.....	Do.
Bucks County Producers Cooperative Association.	Doylestown.....	Pennsylvania.
Lehigh Valley Egg Producers Cooperative Association.	Bethlehem.....	Do.
Tri-County Producers Cooperative Association, Inc.	Worcester <sup>1</sup> ....	Do.
Producers Cooperative Exchange of Coatesville.	Coatesville.....	Do.
Butler Cooperative Egg Auction, Inc....	Butler.....	Do.
Mid-Hudson Cooperative G. L. F. Egg Auction, Inc.	Poughkeepsie..	New York.
Long Island Cooperative G. L. F. Egg Auction, Inc.	Central Islip, Long Island.	Do.
Capital District Cooperative G. L. F. Egg Auction Association, Inc.	Albany.....	Do.
Hamden Cooperative Poultry Auction, Inc.	Hamden.....	Connecticut.
Connecticut Farmers Cooperative Auction Association, Inc.	Hartford.....	Do.
Willimantic Poultry Association, Inc....	Willimantic.....	Do.
Brockton Cooperative Egg Auction Association.	Avon.....	Massachusetts.
Springfield Cooperative Auction Market Association.	Springfield.....	Do.
Wooster Cooperative Poultry Association.	Wooster.....	Ohio.
Bucyrus Cooperative Poultry Association.	Bucyrus.....	Do.
New Hampshire Egg Auction, Inc.....	Derry.....	New Hampshire.
Rhode Island Cooperative Auction Association, Inc.	Providence.....	Rhode Island.

<sup>1</sup> Association located at Center Point.

TABLE 21.—PERCENTAGE OF ALL FARMS REPORTING 400 OR MORE CHICKENS OR CLASSIFIED AS POULTRY FARMS, AND PERCENTAGE OF ALL CHICKENS IN FLOCKS OF 400 OR MORE OR IN POULTRY-FARM FLOCKS, FOR THE UNITED STATES, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS AND SELECTED STATES, 1930

Division and State	Percentage of all farms		Percentage of all chickens	
	Reporting 400 or more chickens	Classified as poultry farms	In flocks of 400 or more	In poultry-farm flocks
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
United States.....	1.3	2.6	13.4	14.7
Geographic divisions:				
New England.....	3.4	8.0	35.2	45.2
Middle Atlantic.....	4.1	7.4	29.1	31.2
East North Central.....	1.0	3.8	6.7	10.2
West North Central.....	1.5	2.9	6.7	5.7
South Atlantic.....	.5	1.4	11.0	13.4
East South Central.....	.1	.4	2.5	2.9
West South Central.....	.4	.9	4.8	5.3
Mountain.....	1.7	2.5	18.1	18.2
Pacific.....	9.1	10.4	65.2	67.1
Selected States:				
New Hampshire.....	4.2	10.9	39.1	55.6
Massachusetts.....	5.9	13.1	44.4	56.5
Rhode Island.....	5.8	13.9	42.8	45.2
Connecticut.....	6.3	11.8	45.8	50.9
New York.....	3.6	5.9	28.4	29.9
New Jersey.....	14.4	19.2	61.0	63.8
Pennsylvania.....	3.2	6.9	21.1	23.6
Ohio.....	1.3	4.9	9.1	13.8
Iowa.....	2.7	2.1	8.8	3.3
Missouri.....	1.5	7.0	7.3	12.9
North Carolina.....	.1	.4	3.1	4.1
Alabama.....	.1	.3	4.1	4.6
Texas.....	.5	1.1	5.8	6.3
Utah.....	7.2	6.7	50.0	48.5
Washington.....	8.5	12.2	55.1	63.9
Oregon.....	2.5	5.6	25.6	32.6
California.....	12.9	11.4	75.7	74.2

Source of data: Computed from the Census of Agriculture, 1930.

TABLE 22.—COOPERATIVE EGG AND POULTRY AUCTION ASSOCIATIONS:  
DATE OF INCORPORATION AND DATE OF FIRST EGG AND POULTRY  
SALE

Location of association	Date of incorporation	Date of first sale	
		Eggs	Poultry
Toms River, N. J.-----	May 19, 1930	June 2, 1930	-----
Flemington, N. J.-----	July 12, 1930 <sup>1</sup>	Aug. 1, 1930	Apr. 29, 1931
Vineland, N. J.-----	Mar. 12, 1931 <sup>2</sup>	June 2, 1931 <sup>3</sup>	Sept. 20, 1932
Mt. Holly, N. J.-----	Dec. 7, 1931	Jan. 5, 1932 <sup>4</sup>	Dec. 8, 1931
Paterson, N. J.-----	Jan. 19, 1933	Feb. 3, 1933	May 3, 1933
Hightstown, N. J.-----	do <sup>5</sup>	Nov. 2, 1933	Nov. 4, 1937
Doylestown, Pa.-----	Apr. 27, 1931	July 13, 1931	Apr. 13, 1937
Bethlehem, Pa.-----	May 12, 1932	July 12, 1932	-----
Center Point, Pa.-----	June 1, 1932	July 11, 1932	-----
Coatesville, Pa.-----	Jan. 21, 1937 <sup>6</sup>	Sept. 20, 1932	Apr. 4, 1935
Butler, Pa.-----	June 5, 1933	July 11, 1933	-----
Central Islip, N. Y.-----	Oct. 10, 1932	Oct. 26, 1932	Jan. 18, 1933
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.-----	Dec. 13, 1932	Oct. 18, 1932	( <sup>7</sup> )
Albany, N. Y.-----	June 15, 1933	July 25, 1933	June 6, 1934
Buffalo, N. Y.-----	July 19, 1933	do	-----
Brooklyn, N. Y.-----	June 5, 1934	July 7, 1934	-----
Willimantic, Conn.-----	Jan. 30, 1931 <sup>8</sup>	Oct. 23, 1934	Oct. 23, 1934
Hartford, Conn.-----	Apr. 18, 1933	Apr. 26, 1933	Apr. 26, 1933
Hamden, Conn.-----	Dec. 14, 1934 <sup>9</sup>	Apr. 25, 1933	Apr. 25, 1933
Brockton, Mass.-----	Aug. 2, 1932	Aug. 1, 1932	Feb. 28, 1934
Springfield, Mass.-----	July 19, 1933	July 6, 1933	Feb. 13, 1934
Wooster, Ohio.-----	May 2, 1932	July 11, 1932	Apr. 4, 1935
Bucyrus, Ohio.-----	Jan. 6, 1934	June 11, 1934	-----
Derry, N. H.-----	Oct. 19, 1937 <sup>10</sup>	do	-----
Providence, R. I.-----	July 16, 1930	July 16, 1936	June 15, 1937
Lynn, Mass. <sup>11</sup> -----	July 1, 1937	Oct. 18, 1937	-----

<sup>1</sup> The name of the association was changed from "Flemington Auction Market Association, Inc.," to "Flemington Auction Market Cooperative Association, Inc.," on Sept. 16, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> The "Vineland and South Jersey Cooperative Egg Auction and Poultry Association, Inc.," was formed by the merger of the "Vineland Cooperative Poultry Association" and the "Cooperative Egg Auction Association of South Jersey, Inc.," on July 21, 1934.

<sup>3</sup> Original poultry auction located at Eimer, N. J.; moved to Vineland on May 4, 1933.

<sup>4</sup> First eggs offered for sale; poultry sold previously.

<sup>5</sup> Organized originally as a fruit and vegetable auction association; eggs not handled until Nov. 2, 1933.

<sup>6</sup> Operated from Sept. 20, 1932, to Jan. 21, 1937, under the Coatesville Chamber of Commerce. Organized as a farmers' cooperative marketing association on Jan. 21, 1937.

<sup>7</sup> Poultry auction tried at Monticello, N. Y., in June 1934 but proved unsuccessful.

<sup>8</sup> Prior to this date the association operated under the name of the Windham County Poultry, Pigeon, and Small Stock Association, originally incorporated on Nov. 19, 1925.

<sup>9</sup> Operated under the New Haven Auction Association from Apr. 25, 1933, to Dec. 14, 1934.

<sup>10</sup> Operated from June 11, 1934, to Nov. 17, 1937, by the Farmers' Trading Post, Inc.

<sup>11</sup> The Maine Poultry Cooperative, Inc., has its principal office at Augusta, Me., where it began to operate on a pool basis. Later a sales office was established at Lynn, Mass., where the auction method of selling was attempted. This sales office is still operating but not selling at auction.

Source of data: Compiled from the association records by the authors in 1938.

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