South St. Paul. These wholesales sell supplies amounting to millions of dollars annually. Petroleum products, automotive equipment and supplies, coal, paint, twine, and equipment for bulk and service station sales are some of the major supply items purchased from the Midland and Central Exchange. In subsequent paragraphs there is discussion of the services of the Central Wholesale, and also of the Wisconsin Cooperative Farm Supply Co. located in Madison, and the Fox River Valley Cooperative Wholesale at Appleton. By participating in the large-scale operations of the wholesales, the locals are able to increase their earnings.

A considerable number of dairy plants in Wisconsin purchase creamery machinery and supplies from the Land O'Lakes Creameries in Minneapolis in order to take advantage of its extensive supply services. In addition the locals may obtain assistance from Land O'Lakes in planning machinery installations, and in making and servicing such installations. Land O'Lakes also operates a feed department which is patronized by a large number of individuals and locals in Wisconsin.

Central Sells to 200 Associations

Central Cooperative Wholesale.—Of the wholesale supply cooperatives with headquarters in Wisconsin, the Central Cooperative Wholesale in Superior is the largest, transacting a $3.7 million dollar a year business. It is a general wholesale organization, handling consumer merchandise and farm supplies. It sells to about 200 associations, mostly retail cooperative stores, approximately 130 of them being share-owning members. These locals have over 40,000 individual members and in addition about a third as many nonmember patrons. They serve a wide area in northern Wisconsin, the Michigan Upper Peninsula, northern Minnesota, and an eastern section of North Dakota. Although some of the locals are in cities, a large majority are in farming communities.

Since organization in 1917, the Central has greatly increased the types of services that it renders. At Superior, it operates not only the main warehouse, but also a large bakery, a coffee roasting plant, and a feed mill. In Minnesota at Virginia, it has a branch warehouse and feed terminal. Limited wholesale stocks are maintained at Hancock in Wisconsin, at Ironwood and Trenary in Michigan, and at Wadena in Minnesota. Dis
strict shipments also are made from those points. Plants, equipment, and land of the Central have a total valuation of almost $190,000.

The Central Cooperative Wholesale sells many types of farm, marketing, and general-store supplies. It handles a complete line of groceries, coffee, and bakery products from its own plants; general household supplies; work clothing; a limited line of women's and children's clothing and notions; rubber footwear and other rubber goods; hardware and paints; radios and electric appliances; lumber, coal, roofing, and allied building supplies; feeds and flour; oil, gasoline, and greases; tires and batteries; and general farm supplies.

During its 20-odd years of growth and success, the sales made by the Central have steadily increased in dollar value each year except in the periods of falling prices in the early 20's, the early 30's, and in 1938. In each of the 3 years 1937, '38, and '39, sales have aggregated over $3,000,000. Record highs were made in 1939 with sales of more than $3,400,000, and profits topping $85,000.

The Central Cooperative Wholesale has stressed a quality program. Its "Co-op" registered label is used on most of the supplies it sells, many of which are made by manufacturers in accordance with the association's specifications. It buys also through National Cooperatives, Inc., obtaining the benefits of the large-scale transactions of the national organization. It purchases lubricating oils from the Farmers Union Central Exchange of South St. Paul.

The affiliated locals receive merchandise both from the Central's warehouses and directly from manufacturers and dealers on instructions issued by the Central. Petroleum products are usually delivered directly to retail points.

A number of additional services are rendered to the locals. The affiliated cooperatives may have their accounts audited on a cost basis by an accountant from the Central, and they may obtain assistance on organization mat-

The Central Cooperative Wholesale's main building at Superior, Wis., houses the general offices, warehouse, and coffee roastery.
ters, and on membership and educational programs. As a part of its extensive work in cooperative education, the Central issues two weekly publications, the Co-operative Builder, and Finnish Co-op Weekly.

Wisconsin Cooperative Farm Supply Co.—The Wisconsin Cooperative Farm Supply Co. at Madison is a wholesale farm-supply distributing agency. It was organized in 1937 to take over this function from the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation (Cooperative). Feed, seed, fertilizer, and petroleum products are the major commodities handled. Five cooperative associations are the members of the Wisconsin Cooperative Farm Supply Co. and hold its common stock. Each of the five member associations has voting representation in the wholesale supply company in proportion to their respective individual farmer memberships. The object of this provision is to give an equal voting right to each farmer member of the five co-ops. Commodities are sold by the Wisconsin Cooperative Farm Supply Co. to both member and nonmember local farm-supply cooperatives. Sales in the fiscal year ended September 30, 1939, amounted to more than $260,000.

Fox River Valley Cooperative Wholesale.—A successful newcomer in the field, the Fox River Valley Cooperative Wholesale, at Appleton, sold supplies for almost $470,000 in the 13-month period ended July 31, 1940, its fourth year of operation, and realized a net saving of over $21,500. In the spring of 1936, a group of retail farmer-owned cooperatives in the Fox River Valley, located in central and eastern Wisconsin, joined in organizing the wholesale-purchasing association for the purpose of handling hardware, petroleum products, and farm supplies. Today the wholesale is receiving the active support of its 38 retail member associations representing more than 15,000 farmers.

The original membership dues together with the annual dues represent an initial investment of $200, which has grown during the 4-year period to a net worth of nearly $50,000. Certificates of capital interest on a patronage basis are issued each year in the amount of the profits realized. In accordance with the revolving-fund basis on which the certificates are to be redeemed, the oldest ones will be paid first.

The cooperative owns its own land and warehouse with a 360-foot railroad siding in Appleton, and maintains its sales office there. The major items stocked are twine, rope, plumbing supplies and fixtures, water systems, electrical appliances, hardware, paint, wire and fencing, auto supplies, grease and oil, insecticides, alcohol, seed, and feed. The wholesale's trademark "Fox Co-operative" is carried on many of these commodities. The co-

At the warehouse of the Dane County Cooperative Farm Supply Co. in Madison, Wis., 1,500 patrons buy flour, feed, seed, fertilizer, salt, and motor oil.
op also sells petroleum products, having a refinery connection and shipping tank cars of "Fox Co-operative" gasoline, kerosene, and tractor fuels on a commission basis to its members. All petroleum products are being prepared according to specifications designed to meet the requirements of members.

Many other commodities such as roofing, wire fencing, and nails are shipped direct to retail co-ops from the manufacturer in carload lots. In 1940 the Fox River Valley Cooperative Wholesale had jobbing connections with more than 150 manufacturers of various commodities which are either distributed under its own trade-mark or national trade-marks.

Other wholesales in Wisconsin.—In addition to the cooperatives which have just been described, there are a number of other wholesales operating in Wisconsin. The A & B Cooperative Oil Association at Ashland in north Wisconsin is making bulk sales of oil to cooperative member-groups. Cooperative Services, Inc., located at Maple, in northwest Douglas County, makes oil sales at wholesale to gasoline stations owned by the five local cooperative stores that organized and own the wholesale. It also makes retail sales of building material and farm machinery directly to members of the stores. Some 20 local cooperatives formed the Central Wisconsin Cooperative Warehouse Association at Camp Douglas in Juneau County, to pool their orders for supplies. Representative from the locals in this wholesale usually meet once a month and decide on the placing of pool orders. Each local handles its own orders and pays for its supplies, the only funds the wholesale handles being the commissions received on the bulk orders.

Aided through the years by the interest, and often the active assistance, of the State organizations of the general farm associations—the Grange, the
Mr. Farmer: "Which route do your supplies follow?"

Farmers Equity Union, and the Farm Bureau Federation—the purchasing of supplies cooperatively has become one of the major activities in which Wisconsin farmers have united for joint action. The dollar volume of the business of the purchasing associations is surpassed only by that of the dairy co-ops. By cooperative purchasing farmers are saving many thousands of dollars annually.

**Co-ops Provide Farm Business Services**

Wisconsin farmers have joined in cooperative action not only to market their products and purchase agricultural and household supplies, but also to provide essential farm business services. They have formed mutual insurance, telephone, and irrigation companies. An extensive cooperative rural electrification program is underway. Providing cooperatively the facilities of frozen-food lockers is a service which is relatively new.

In the livestock field farmers have organized about four or five cooperative artificial inseminating associations. The variety of needs that may be met through cooperative action is demonstrated by the fact that a cooperative burial association is operating in Marathon County, with headquarters at Spencer.

Since as early as 1860 groups of Wisconsin farmers have taken cooperative action to protect themselves against property losses from the hazards of fire and lightning. In that year two farmers’ mutual fire insurance companies were formed—in Manitowoc County, the Mutual Farmers Insurance Co.; and in Kenosha County the Bristol Mutual Insurance Co. There are almost 200 companies now operating, the services of at least one company being available in almost every county. The membership was approximately 240,000 in 1936. Insurance in force at the close of 1937, the latest year for which this information is available, amounted to more than $1,150,000,000. The bulk of this insurance was on farms, but some on urban properties.

The cost of this mutual protection is exceptionally low in the Badger State. Only a few other States equal or excel Wisconsin in this respect. In 1937 the cost for losses per $100 of insurance amounted to 14.5 cents, and for operating expenses, 4.2 cents; making a total of only 18.7 cents. The Wisconsin companies paid approximately $1,660,000 for losses in that year.

In addition to these farm fire insurance mutuals Wisconsin has 13 farm mutual windstorm insurance companies, some of which also write insurance against loss by hail on growing