you even though you take a loss on a rising market. Put this burden on your sales manager’s shoulder, but stand behind him strongest when the market goes against him, remembering that he can’t win every time.

**VALUE OF COÖPERATIVE MARKETING OF FRUITS**

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The question has been asked “Why was the Wisconsin Cranberry Sales Company formed? How was it formed? And how successful has been the experiment?”

In the main this whole question of the value of coöperative marketing of cranberries or any fruit hinges on the proper methods of distribution. Before the Wisconsin Cranberry Sales Co. was formed competitive marketing failed utterly at a time when large crops were harvested. Growers had no way of knowing what markets were available and they were at the mercy of buyers who visited their bogs and bought their crops outright. If they were unwilling to sell outright they found little satisfaction in shipping to commission men.

The experience of one grower illustrates the unscientific system of marketing then prevailing. This grower had a crop of about 2000 barrels and ordinarily should have made a profit of from $2000 to $4000. He sold the first two cars at $5.50 per barrel, the next three at $3.50 and the last few cars were sold so low as to show a loss on the whole crop. Every grower was a competitor of his neighbor as each tried to rush his berries into some market as he got them ready, regardless of the condition of said market, of the weather, or of the price. Everyone competing, there were no standard grades nor uniformity of pack. The result was that large cities, such as Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Kansas City, were overstocked with carelessly packed fruit, while other markets were bare.

In 1905 the Wisconsin growers under the leadership of Judge Gaynor of Grand Rapids, held together and forced the buyers to pay 50c per barrel more for their berries than would have been obtained had each grower sold his crop in competition with his neighbor. The next year the Wisconsin Cranberry Sales Co. was formed, a stock company organized, a constitution and by-laws adopted, a board of directors elected and a sales agent employed. Their first step was the adoption of standard grades and brands and an attempt to furnish labels and to try to get a uniform pack. Every grower was urged to adopt better methods of packing. The first year was so successful that it gained the attention of the eastern growers and the National Fruit Exchange was organized, being formed by the union of the New England Cranberry Sales Co., the New Jersey Cranberry Sales Co. and the Wisconsin Cranberry Sales Co.

Commercially these three states, namely, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Wisconsin, furnish about all the cranberries grown. Massachusetts grows over 65 per cent, New Jersey 25 per cent and Wisconsin less than 10 per cent. It is interesting to note that Wisconsin growers producing
less than 10 per cent of the entire crop of cranberries in the United States, were the pioneers in the formation of our sales company.

About four years ago the name of the National Fruit Exchange was changed to the American Cranberry Exchange. It now handles about 65 per cent of all the berries grown, dominates the market somewhat, distributes the berries to the markets heretofore unknown and stands as a buffer between the producer and the middleman. Its success has been phenomenal. It keeps in constant touch with all the producing districts and compiles data extremely important in making prices and planning publicity campaigns. It now maintains offices in Chicago and New York and keeps in close touch with all markets, has been largely instrumental in getting the growers to pack better fruit, makes all collections and gets the railroads to pay claims promptly. During a time of warm weather and consequent bad market the company has held back shipments and thus stopped demoralization of the markets and resultant losses to the growers. This is a most important point, as a glutted market rarely means a low price to consumers on fresh fruit, but always results in a heavy loss to producer. The big point in co-operative marketing is the wider distribution of fruit and this cannot be too strongly emphasized.

Before the inception of our sales company, certain large markets would be glutted, prices very low, and another city within 100 miles would be bare, resulting in economic waste and loss to the producer. A few years ago cranberries were selling at $5 per barrel in New York City and the market was very weak, while Philadelphia market was bare and very strong at $7. Under co-operative marketing such a condition could not occur. Now if one market is flooded, cars are diverted and shipments stopped until normal conditions return.

But it must not be thought that the forming of such a company has been a get-rich-quick-scheme for the cranberry grower. What the organization has accomplished has been to maintain a fair average price for our fruit even in the face of greatly increased production. In theory the sales company is absolutely the ideal system and in practice it has been a success, though far from perfect.

Some growers have joined the sales company and then resigned and under the umbrella held by the sales company they have been able to find a market where they can get a little better price than those in the organization, but these cases are, fortunately, exceptional. For the nine years prior to the formation of the sales company the price obtained by one grower was $5.85 per barrel. During the past nine years,—the figures for this year are not yet available,—this same grower received an average price of $6.55 per barrel, 70 cents per barrel more, and this increase in the face of more than double the production during some years.

One of the great benefits to the cranberry growers from the formation of the Wisconsin Cranberry Sales Co. has been to unite them and to develop a co-operative community feeling. Twenty years ago there were local jealousies, long draw-out lawsuits and troubles of every description. Now these same growers visit each other's bogs, confer together over their many problems, ship their berries together, share in the same profits and buy their supplies together.