

the State. Many of the locals are affiliated with one of the several wholesale associations, located either in Wisconsin or Minnesota.

There are also about 25 associations which have developed the selling of supplies as their major business, although when most of them were organized some 20 or 30 years ago, their chief purpose was the handling of grain. In addition, many of the marketing associations render the service of purchasing supplies and reselling them to their members.

On later pages summary statements concerning the operations of some of these marketing and purchasing associations will be found. For each major type of cooperative, comments are made on one or more particular associations. In some cases, an association described has at present the largest dollar volume of business of the Wisconsin co-ops of that type; in other instances, an association selected may be the oldest in a group. It would be

grossly unfair to mention these associations by name without stating that many others in the State are doing an equally outstanding cooperative job.

Farmers Organized Mutuals Many Years Ago

Mutual companies.—Farmers' mutual fire and lightning insurance companies are one of the oldest types of cooperatives in the country. Wisconsin farmers are operating almost 200 such enterprises, which are located in nearly all parts of the State. The heaviest concentration is in the southeastern area. These companies reported a membership of over 240,000 in 1936.

Farmers have provided themselves for many years with telephone service through their mutual companies. The number of these companies is large, approximately 500, although the annual income from assessments or fixed charges is small.

Farmers' Marketing and Purchasing Associations Organized¹ in Wisconsin, by Periods and Commodity Groups, 1876-1939

Period	Dairy products	Fruits and vegetables	Grain ²	Livestock	Poultry and eggs	Miscellaneous	Total marketing	Purchasing	Grand total
1876-80.....	1						1		1
1881-85.....	21						21		21
1886-90.....	52		1				53		53
1891-95.....	62						62	2	64
1896-00.....	110	1				1	112		112
1901-05.....	144	2	3	1			150	2	152
1906-10.....	160	9	17	21		7	214	18	232
1911-15.....	239	7	17	54	1	17	335	67	402
1916-20.....	371	16	38	142	1	44	612	85	697
1921-25.....	174	11	3	65	2	8	263	50	313
1926-30.....	59	6		35		4	104	45	149
1931-35.....	31	9		31		5	76	80	156
1936-39.....	7	2		6		3	18	13	31
Total ..	1,431	63	79	355	4	89	2,021	362	2,383

¹ Based upon the associations for which the Cooperative Research and Service Division has records.

² In Wisconsin these associations started as grain marketing cooperatives and later developed the purchasing of farm supplies as a side line. Because the supply business became so substantial that it has outgrown the business in grain it is doubtless more logical to consider this group of cooperatives at present as purchasing associations rather than grain marketing associations.

At Wisconsin Rapids owners of cranberry marshes have formed a mutual irrigation company.

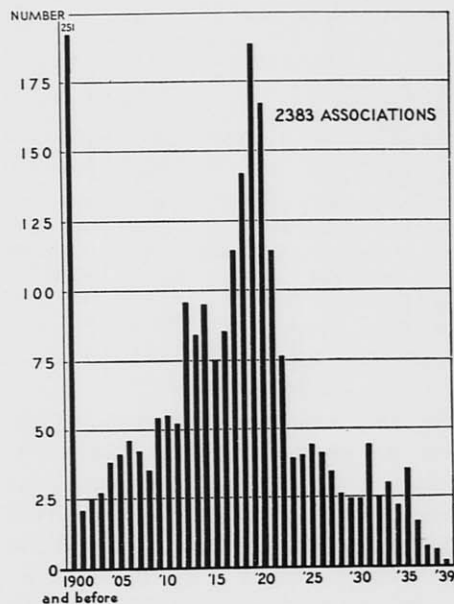
Electric associations.—Loans for 27 Wisconsin electric cooperatives had been made by the Rural Electrification Administration by June 30, 1940. A large majority of the plants had been energized and were in operation. The heaviest concentration of the projects is in a broad western area of the State extending from the southern border as far north as Douglas County. Other plants are located in Rock County as well as Columbia, Adams, Waupaca, and Oconto Counties.

Refrigerated food lockers.—A new cooperative development has taken place within the last few years. A number of creameries, cheese factories, and other types of cooperative associations have expanded their services by installing lockers for the storage of frozen food. In 1939 the first cooperative organized solely for this purpose began operations. All told, approximately 50 co-ops were providing locker service in 1940.

Breeding associations.—A number of breeders' cooperative associations have been formed in order to carry out breed improvement programs.

Credit is available to individual Wisconsin farmers and also to their associations on a cooperative basis. Through more than 100 national farm loan associations long-term loans are made to farmers by the Federal Land Bank of St. Paul. The 21 production credit associations in the State provide short-term production credit to farmers. Cooperative associations which the farmers have formed obtain credit from the St. Paul Bank for Cooperatives.

Farmers' Marketing and Purchasing Associations Organized in Wisconsin, by Years, 1900-39.



Thirty percent of all the farmers' marketing and purchasing associations organized in Wisconsin were set up during the 5 years beginning with 1917 and closing with 1921. The peak year of the period was 1919 when 189 associations were formed. This was at the rate of a new association for every second day including Sundays. Less than 50 associations a year have been formed since 1923.

Pioneers Began Cooperation

The story goes that a pioneer woman launched Wisconsin's first cooperative business venture. This was in 1840; her name was Anne Pickett. She and her husband had emigrated to Wisconsin from one of the States farther east, where they had already had experience in raising cows and making milk products. After the Picketts moved to Wisconsin they wished to make cheese and sell it. They had,