

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

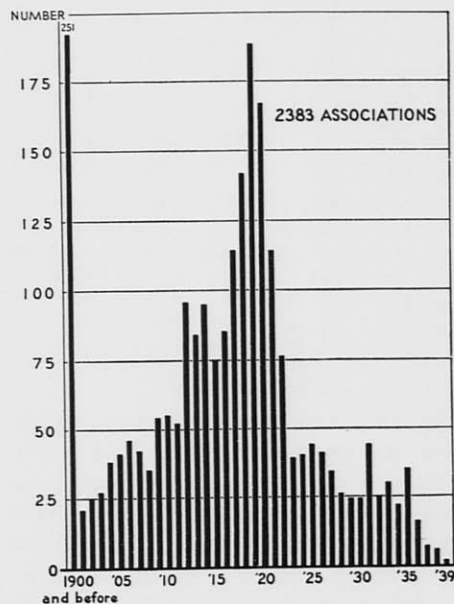
Electric associations.—Loans for 27 Wisconsin electric cooperatives had been made by the Rural Electrification Administration by June 30, 1940. A large majority of the plants had been energized and were in operation. The heaviest concentration of the projects is in a broad western area of the State extending 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.

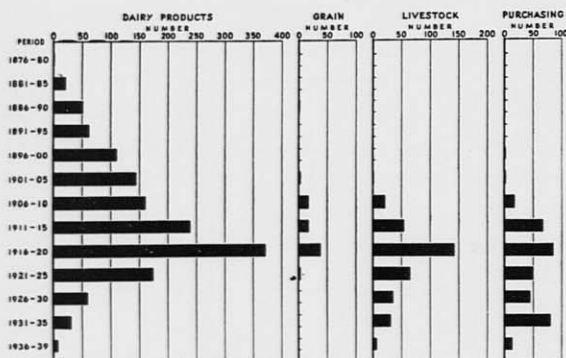


Thirty percent of all the farmers' marketing and purchasing associations organized in Wisconsin were set up during the 5 years beginning with 1917 and closing with 1921. The peak year of the period was 1919 when 189 associations were formed. This was at the rate of a new association for every second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

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



The 5 years from 1916 to 1920 was the period of greatest farmer activity in organizing marketing and purchasing co-operatives. A total of 697 associations were launched. Of this number 371 were for making and for marketing dairy products; 142 were local organizations for assembling and shipping live stock; 85 were for purchasing supplies; and 38 for marketing grain.

however, only about 10 cows, which were not enough to produce a sufficient quantity of milk for the profitable manufacture of cheese. Anne solved the problem by getting the neighbors to pool their milk with the Pickett supply, and she made it all into cheese in the kitchen of her log cabin. Thus a cooperative business venture began at Lake Mills, Wis., where the Picketts made cheese for many years.

An experiment to form an idealistic society for cooperative living and working was made at Ripon, Wis., in 1844 by a group of American-born farmers. They named it the Wisconsin Phalanx. Although the society was financially successful—it had assets of \$30,000 3 years after organization—some of the members became dissatisfied and brought about the peaceful dissolution of the organization in 1850.

The Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, organized in 1851, became one of the most active in the United States. It helped to spread agricultural knowledge by inaugurating the holding of

fairs, and by publishing its transactions in large volumes. The Wisconsin Legislature passed an act in 1897 creating a State board of agriculture, which superseded the State agricultural society.

Number of Cooperatives Has Greatly Increased

From the humble beginning in 1840 agricultural cooperative enterprises began to develop in much greater numbers in Wisconsin during the last third of the nineteenth century and have continued to develop up to the present time. During all of this period the main reason for their organization has been the desire on the part of farmers to improve their economic welfare by working together. Their desires have been emphasized and crystallized into action at various times by the pressure of low prices, by changes taking place in the agriculture of the State, and by the activities of general farm organizations and various governmental agencies.