

**MARKETS AND MARKETING**

By J. R. Shinn

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The subject of markets and marketing is claiming more attention today than ever before in the history of our country. I have endeavored to study the markets more from a local point of view than from the point of view of the general markets of the world. I am presuming that Mr. Sampson, in his discussion of the subject, has taken the general point of view, and I can therefore devote my time to the discussion of the markets from a local consideration.

Among the various duties of a county agriculturist, the study of markets for the farmers of his district is of prime importance. This is necessary in order that he may stimulate production along the lines which will prove remunerative to the farmers. If there is no ready sale for the products which the farmer is producing or such products must be sold at such a figure that no profit is realized by the producer, it is obvious that a stimulation of production along these lines would be unwarranted. On the other hand, if farmers are producing, or can be induced to produce, commodities for which there is a ready sale, especially in the home market, there is greater chance for profit. Especially is this true where the products are present consumed by the local market are brought in from a great distance and these same products can be grown locally. For illustration, take the matter of pork production. In my study of the markets of Spokane, I have found that there were \$2,100,000 worth of pork shipped into the city from the Middle West states. As a matter of fact, a great many Spokane farmers are producing more or less pork at a very profitable figure. The greater percentage of the farmers in Spokane county are shipping their raw material, their wheat, to the general market, where it comes into competition with corn that is used for producing the pork which later on is freighted back to Spokane. It is very obvious that if this raw material could be converted into pork here and the middleman's profits on the wheat, the freight charges on the wheat, the middleman's profit on the pork and the freight charges on the pork could be saved by producing this pork here, there would be a great chance of profit to local farmers who turn their attention to the production of pork.

Not only is this true of the production of pork, but it may also be true in other lines of agriculture. For instance, there is the problem of butter production in Spokane county, in order that local farmers may provide butter for the enormous demand made by the Spokane consumers. Reliable parties claim that Spokane consumes \$1,300,000 worth of butter each year that must be shipped in from the Middle West. As is generally known, this butter sells for a very high average price to the consumer.

In the consideration of this problem of butter production many factors must be taken into consideration. First of all, cheap feed must be provided for the cows of the farmers who give their attention to producing butter. This is true because the amount of freight charges necessary to be added to the consumer's price of the butter is very small, compared to the retail price of this commodity. The Middle West farmers who are going into the dairy business are going into it to stay. As a general thing, they are blessed with an enormous production of corn silage per acre. Without this corn silage or another silage crop to take its place, the profits of the dairy business in the Middle West would be severely curtailed. It is plain, therefore, out here in the Northwest, that if the dairymen are to successfully and permanently compete with the Middle West dairymen on the Spokane market, they too must produce cheap feed for their cows. In the production of silage it is generally believed that corn furnishes the superior crop for this purpose. The fact that Spokane farmers who have erected silos have almost universally chosen this crop, led me to inquire as to the yields secured by them. As a matter of fact, out of some 15 silos found in operation in 1913, only one man had a yield which he claimed was above six tons per acre. In the other instances, the yield ranged between two and three tons of corn silage per acre. It is very plain, to the casual observer, that if the Spokane dairymen are to stay in the dairy business and compete with the Middle West farmers who secure a yield of 15 to 25 tons of silage per acre, another silage crop must be found that is more productive than corn. Such a crop seems to have been found by Mr. Thomas Griffiths, president of the Glen Tana dairy. This crop is winter wheat and winter vetch, which are sown together in the fall of the year and for the pres-

ent season is making a yield of better than 20 tons of silage per acre. Upon measuring the green wheat in many of the fields in different sections of Spokane county, I find that the yield ranges between eight and 20 tons per acre. The average would be perhaps 12 tons of silage per acre. Here it would seem that the factor of silage at least is solved for the Spokane dairymen, when it comes to producing cheap feed for their cows. Other feeds could be mentioned along this line. Most of the concentrated, highly protein feeds are imported to Spokane. Large quantities of soy bean meal are imported from Japan, while as a matter of fact, Canadian field peas can be grown very cheaply under Spokane conditions and ground into a meal that is practically as rich in protein as the soy bean meal. Furthermore, as another feed entering into the rations of the dairy cows, clover hay or alfalfa hay can be produced very satisfactorily by the Spokane farmers.

When the farmers of Spokane county become educated to the use and benefits of the above crops, they will be in a position to successfully take over the local market for butter as far as the market relates to the cheap production of raw material entering into the problem. This production of cheap feed, however, is only a part of the dairyman's problems in Spokane county. The average price at the present time paid for premium butter is 32 cents, while the price paid to the producer for the butterfat is 23 cents. It is generally conceded that the producer should receive only one cent less for his butter fat than the wholesale price for the butter. Instead of receiving 23 cents the dairyman should get 31 cents or the consumer should pay 24 cents. This problem is a very serious one from the producer's point of view. Not only are the producers dissatisfied with the price paid them for the butterfat, but they are also dissatisfied frequently with the weights and tests given them for their cream. The only way in which this problem will be met satisfactorily will be by the organization of sections of the county in the same manner as the highly developed dairy sections have used the co-operative creamery.

When these problems for the dairymen are solved, they will be prepared to take care of the demands made by the local market for butter.

Other instances, where the local market demands products that can be grown locally may be found in the canned fruits and vegetables used by it. Many of our Western towns are classed as "tin-can" towns. Spokane is no exception to this rule, apparently from the data which I have gathered relating to the amount of fruits and vegetables handled by the wholesale grocers. Mr. E. L. Powell of the firm of Powell & Sanders, kindly furnished me the following data relative to the amount of canned fruits and vegetables used by them in 1913:

Corn, 3644 cases, with 24 quart cans per case, making total cans, 135,456.

Beans, 1613 cases, with 24 quart cans per case, making total cans, 38,612.

Peas, 6322 cases, with 24 quart cans per case, making total cans, 151,728.

Tomatoes, 18,145 cases, with 24 quart cans per case, making total cans, 435,480.

Blackberries, 1492 cases, with 12 gallon cans per case, making total cans, 17,904.

Pumpkin, 782 cases, with 12 quart cans per case, making total cans, 9144.

Apples, 1000 cases, with 12 quart cans per case, making total number of cans, 12,000.

Mr. Powell said that these figures were likely to be too small in some instances and in the case of tomatoes they were too large. Some corn was carried over from last year, while this year some tomatoes were carried over. Another point he mentioned as affecting the figures was that in some cases not all the goods were included in the list, owing to the fact that it was impossible to locate all shipments without going into more detail than he had done. When asked what would be more accurate figures, he gave the more accurate figures, he gave the following: Corn, 15,000 cases (360,000 cans); beans, 2000 cases (48,000 cans); peas, 5000 cases (140,000 cans); tomatoes, 15,000 cases (360,000 cans); blackberries, 1500 cases (18,000 cans); pumpkin, 1000 cases (12,000 cans); and apples 1500 cases (18,000 cans). Mr. Powell furthermore estimated that they handled about one-fifth the trade in Spokane.

So far as relates to home production of this enormous quantity of canned goods, not a single can was produced locally, although in the case of tomatoes many tons of them rotted upon the vines in the tomato patches of the county during the year 1913. Here is another instance where production needs to be

stimulated and the utilization made of the products that can be produced at home.

Another point that I might mention in this connection is the fact that most of the farmers who are producing and marketing their own products on the home market claim that they are surer of their profits than when their products are shipped to a distance; and still another factor that is demonstrated by the experience of local producers is the fact that the greater profits are realized by those who term themselves as "the best peddlers." As an illustration of this point, the average potato grower of Spokane county has been unable to sell his potatoes at any price, yet one potato grower who possessed the ability of a good peddler went from house to house with samples of his potatoes and took orders for future deliveries for the price of \$1.40 per hundred. This young man sold his entire crop. Other parties who possess the ability to make good butter are able to find customers in the city at prices ranging practically as high as that paid for fancy creamery butter. The same conditions prevail regarding the sale of eggs. Again, the consumers of Spokane are paying an exceedingly high price for milk. The average farmer is getting 11 1/2 to 13 cents per gallon for his milk, while the consumer is paying 40 cents a gallon for the same milk. This therefore allows 28 cents per gallon for delivering the milk to the consumer. In order to avoid paying such an excessive delivery charge, one of the local farmers near Spokane has established a milk route of his own and is delivering milk at a cost of eight cents per gallon. It will be seen therefore that he is securing nearly 20 cents per gallon net profits over what he would be securing were he relying upon other parties to do the peddling.

Many instances similar to this might be mentioned where the peddling feature plays an important part in the actual profits or loss of the farmer; but from the standpoint of local markets there is a demand for not only cheap production, but also an adequate system of bringing the consumer and producer in contact so that there will not be the wide margin between the price paid by the consumer and the price received by the producer.

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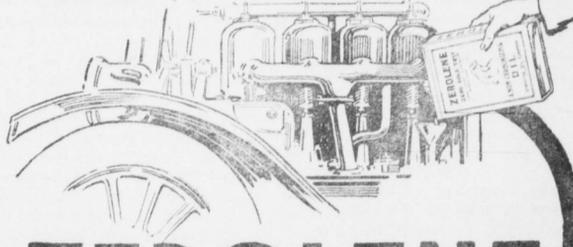
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