

Better Grain Grades at Superior

The Effort of the Wisconsin Grain Board to Be Fair to Farmers: Prejudice Hits Value of this Year's Light Grain

IF THE farmers of North Dakota wanted proof that this state could establish and maintain standard grain grades, they could have it in what is actually being done in Wisconsin. Without being a grain growing state, and handling but a small portion of the entire grain crop grown in the northwest, it still is maintaining a sturdy independence of the huge milling interests of Minneapolis, and showing the farmers what can be done for them by state authority.

The legend that has grown up in Minneapolis to the effect that no institution outside that mill center can establish or maintain grades in northwestern grain, has been disproven by Wisconsin.

While Minneapolis, through the grain grades which its influence secures, squeezes the farmers at every turn, Wisconsin has adopted a broad friendly policy towards them. It does not truckle to them, nor attempt to curry favor, but it believes in a square deal all the year round.

Last year the Wisconsin Grain and Warehouse commission graded 100,000,000 bushels of grain, which was its biggest season, but long before that, while it was still handling only a fraction of that amount, its position had compelled more favorable action by the Minnesota Board of Grain Appeals.

All the farmers of North Dakota will remember the fight headed by the North Dakota Agricultural college in behalf of durum and velvet chaff wheat—how Dr. E. F. Ladd by mill tests proved it superior to several grades of grain that were higher, and how ultimately a spread of 20 cents a bushel between No. 1 durum and No. 1 northern disappeared. A glance today at the Minneapolis quotations shows No. 1 durum ranking in price along with No. 1 northern and sometimes a cent or more above it.

WISCONSIN'S INFLUENCE ON THE MINNESOTA GRADES

But Dr. Ladd's experiments alone did not achieve this result. When the Wisconsin Grain and Warehouse commission found that durum was just as good a wheat as No. 1 northern it placed it in that grade, and, knowing its excellent qualities from their own laboratory experiments, the Minneapolis millers did not propose to let the Twin Ports handle it. The result was that No. 1 durum was raised to No. 1 northern in Minnesota also. Practically the same facts apply to velvet chaff, and a like discrimination against it disappeared after the Wisconsin Grain and Warehouse commission acted upon the scientific information



Here is shown the inspecting room of the Wisconsin Grain and Warehouse commission, the tables beside the tall, unshaded windows, the pans and other paraphernalia, and part of the force. In the picture are shown: Inspectors J. T. Cavanagh (near the window), C. J. Fraser (at the end of the table), J. Holman (standing back of the table near Mr. Fraser) and Chief Deputy Inspector J. B. Coombs (back of table also).

made known by the North Dakota Agricultural college.

It was the initiative of Wisconsin that drove Minnesota to accord more just treatment to the farmers, and this relative attitude has existed ever since the Wisconsin board was established in 1908. It has stood as a friend, and is today a living example of what the North Dakota farmers can do for themselves in the way of fixing grades that will be accepted in the grain trade.

The weakness of the Wisconsin situation is that its grades are not compulsory, but are applied only when requested by the shipper. Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce shippers never request Wisconsin inspection: they prefer Minnesota. But some independent shippers and the Equity Co-Operative exchange of

Wheat buyers have been educated to the belief that light-weight grains necessarily are poor for milling purposes. This is a fine thing for the millers. It helps them make their flour cheaper and still keep the price up.

Superior Wis. (which this year is handling almost two thirds of the grain going to the Twin Ports) ask Wisconsin inspection—a sufficiently clear demonstration as to its value.

MAKE THE GRADES FAIR, IS WISCONSIN'S AIM

"But we have never promised the farmers any better grades than they would get at Minneapolis," said Chairman J. E. Kernan of the Wisconsin Grain and Warehouse commission the other day in Superior. "It has even happened that at times we have not given as high grades. Our position is this: to be fair to the grower and to the shipper; to put a variety or quality of grain where it belongs and then to leave it there. We believe that if grain properly grades No. 1 northern in the fall it grades No. 1 northern in the spring.

"That has not always been the attitude of Minneapolis. By instructions given to the inspectors, they have dropped wheat all along the line for a grade, so that wheat of the same quality that was grading No. 1 in the fall would get only No. 2 in the spring for instance. That is not right, and we have never followed that custom. This was accomplished not by altering the grades but by instructions to the inspectors to bear down heavier on certain defects."

TAKING DR. LADD'S TIP IN FIXING GRADES

As an illustration of the lively interest that the Wisconsin Grain and Warehouse commission shows in its work, Chairman Kernan made a trip to Fargo about three weeks ago with a sample of light weight wheat which he had milled at the A. C. plant for the purpose of guiding the commission in determining what grade to put it into.

No one has ever heard of the Minnesota grade makers sending samples of grain to the Agricultural college for the purpose of getting a milling test before establishing a grade for it. But Wisconsin did this and used the information derived from the experiment by placing all such grain in the "sample grade."

This wheat weighed before cleaning 41.7 pounds per bushel, but after cleaning 50 pounds per bushel. Under the test weights in effect in Minnesota and Wisconsin both this year and in previous years wheat under 49 pounds has been "rejected" or "sample grade." If put in sample grade the grower and buyer can bargain for the price on the quality of the sample submitted. But if it goes into No. 4 northern, there is a fixed quotation for such wheat.

Taking this point into consideration, Mr. Kernan said:

"The wheat we took to Fargo weighed so light that it had to go into sample



The Wisconsin Grain and Warehouse commission, in one of their offices in the Board of Trade building, Superior. Sitting in the chair by his desk, is seen Chairman J. E. Kernan, who has made practical application of milling tests in determining the proper grades for wheat. At his right, standing near the window is Secretary Edward McKinnon and on the other side is Ray J. Nye, the third member of the commission. These men devote their entire time to supervision of warehouses and of the inspection, and weighing of grain at Superior.

The experience of Wisconsin proves that North Dakota need not depend upon the Minnesota grain grades. The market at Superior is one in which an effort is made to be fair to the producers of the Northwest. The hope of the grain producers is in building up the capacity and trade of markets that attempt to deal justly with the grain raiser.