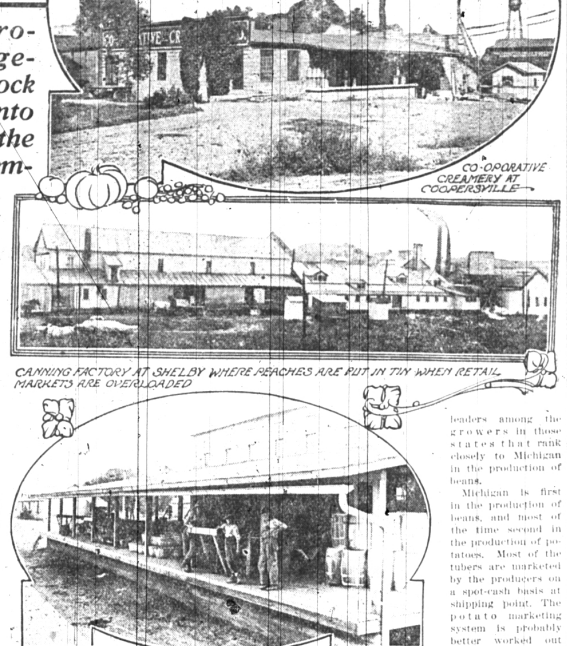
Selling Michigan's Farm Crops

BUSY MORNING AT LANSING MUNICIPAL MARKET

How up-to-date producers of fruit, vegetables, milk and livestock get their products into the market by doing the middlemen's work themselves and pocketing middlemen's profits



CO-OPORATIVE CREAMERY AT COOPERSVILLE

CANNING FACTORY AT SHELBY WHERE PEACHES ARE PUT IN TIN WHEN RETAIL MARKETS ARE OVERLOADED

RECEIVING PLATFORM HARTFORD FRUIT EXCHANGE

MARKETING the farm crops of Michigan is both an elaborate and a complex proposition. The value of the annual crops harvested from the farms and orchards runs into millions of dollars, and the total amount paid by the consumers of these products is twice, and often three times, the sum received by the producer. It cannot very well be otherwise with the existing marketing machinery.

Better than ten million individuals in the United States are engaged in producing, and to a very great degree these are not co-operating with their neighbors. Consequently many middlemen are required to gather up the products from the individuals, bring them together, grade them and distribute them in the quantities and at the places indicated by the demands of the consumers and provide the credit required by those who directly serve the consumers.

In the last analysis marketing is a problem in efficiency. The more efficient the method or system used the more economical the cost of the service. At first the profits of efficiency go to the middlemen who evolve the better methods and they appear to prosper and do. Eventually, however, the economies which produce profits for those between the producers and the consumers will be partially absorbed by the producers on the one hand and the consumers on the other.

This will be true to the degree in which the producers unite and perform certain of the functions now performed by the middlemen. They can do this work more economically than it can be done by existing machinery, and not a little effort is being made to point this fact out to them. Then some of the waste of the present order of things is to be saved by co-operative activity on the part of the consumers. This is going to be even more difficult to bring about than uniting the producers. Yet there are indications that progress is likely to be made in this direction.

The marketing methods by which Michigan producers start their products on the road to the consumer can best be studied by an inspection of the systems that exist in connection with special crops. Of great interest are the methods used in the marketing of fruits, beans, potatoes, dairy products and live stock. Each of the above call for methods that are slightly different and these different systems may be viewed as types of the different kinds of marketing.

There are three principal methods for market the fruits of the state. There is the cash-on-delivery method, the consignment method, and the co-operative method.

Cash on delivery is a form of marketing that is very acceptable to a large number of the fruit growers. It is found in a limited way in all parts of the state. For example, the farmer who delivers a crate of strawberries at the kitchen door, as a rule, gets spot cash; and the fruit grower who sells on the municipal markets in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Bay City, Saginaw, Lansing, and Kalamazoo receives his pay as he hands over the fruit. The grower who solicits mail and express orders generally gets a check either just before shipment or immediately on the arrival of the package. Cash sales of fruit on a large scale occur at several points in the state, notably Benton Harbor and Traverse City. From the time the first strawberry ripens in the early summer until the last barrel of apples is sold in the fall there are men at both these points who, stand ready to write checks for fruit in any quantities from a few crates to a carload.

The fruit is sold on inspection. That is, the grower and buyer meet and look at the fruit together and agree upon prices that fit each particular lot. The buyer offers a price which permits him to resell in some distant market at an advance that not only covers all the expenses, but also provides a generous profit.

The second important form of marketing Michigan fruit is the consignment method. This method is in most cases very unsatisfactory. Yet it flourishes because of the unpreparedness of the producers. It exists in all parts of the state, and will prevail until the vast majority of producers learn the rudiments of marketing. Its presence is an indication of a low community standard of efficiency. In theory the consignment method is as beautiful as a June sunrise. In practice it is as illusive as a sea serpent. Now you have him, now you don't.

Many of the men in the commission business are as honest as the most honorable of our bankers, and a few are as irregular as the bankers enjoying the hospitality of their uncle at Fort Leavenworth. But it is not a question of honesty. It is a question of efficiency. The consignment method is speculative, it is uncertain, it is partial to extremes, it is not favorable to a steady movement of the crops from the producer to the consumer. It is too much a matter of luck. The grower sends his produce forward to the city commission man, not knowing whether the market to which he is consigning is glutted or barren.

The honest commission man does his best to make good sales, but he has no idea as to the amount being forwarded to him, he is not consulted as to whether the market in which he is to sell is favorable or not. He has little money invested in the fruit he is offering for sale and he has more to gain by making quick sales and lots of them, than by fighting for good prices to the producer. Yet the consignment method is about the only way that, as yet, much of the fruit can be marketed. The fruit is ungraded as to quality." It is presented for sale in such small lots that the cash buyer cannot afford to wait around for its arrival at shipping points. It is about the only way for growers in unorganized districts at scattered points to turn the results of their toil into something that will buy tea, coffee, and sugar, or at least will do this part of the time.

The association or co-operative method of marketing is gaining in favor just now. Not only are associations increasing in number, but the volume of fruit handled by the associations is becoming larger year by year. The real function of the fruit-shipping association is to gather together the output from many farms, grade it as to quality, mass it in carloads and market it so as to get all the economies and advantages attributed to large-scale operations. Experience has proved beyond all doubt that the producer profits when he takes over this part of the distributive function and efficiently performs it for himself, instead of paying a middleman to do it for him.

The larger part of the grapes from the Michigan grape belt are now being marketed by associations located at Paw Paw, Lawton and St. Joseph. The peaches from the orchards in the vicinity of South Haven, Hartford, Covert, Bangor, Fennville, Fremont, Ludington and Scottville are brought to central packing houses, where they are graded according to quality and packed to meet the requirements of consumers in far-distant cities. The greater part of the fruit handled by the associations is forwarded in car lots and thus the difference between the less-than-car-lot rate and the car-lot rate is saved to the producer. Furthermore, there are other savings for the producer, particularly in connection with losses in transit, the lodging of glutted markets, bad debts, etc. It is the general rule of the associations to pool the returns for the same varieties and grades, thus evenly distributing the losses and the record sales.

In a few cases the bean growers have organized associations for the operation of elevators on a co-operative basis. When they have so done they have obtained a portion of the middleman's profit. The slogan of the bean growers is "consignatory prices." They give expression to their desire through the activity of the Michigan Bean Growers association and its locals. Each fall just at harvest time the state association meets, reviews the crop figures gathered by state and federal governments, and by individuals, and then the association resolves that the selling price should be so and so. Whereupon word is passed along the line from grower to grower to hold for the figure set. The 1906 meeting was held in Grand Rapids on September 13, and the prices for the season were made $5 a bushel for immediate deliver, with an increase of 15 cents a month until January. The bean jobbers, who were in session in the same city at the same time, were informed of the decision and the individual bean buyers began at once to arrange their plans to fit the proposed schedule. The decision of the Michigan growers was telegraphed to the leaders among the growers in those states that rank closely to Michigan in the production of beans.

Michigan is first in the production of beans, and most of the time second in the production of potatoes. Most of the tubers are marketed by the producers on a spot-cash basis at shipping point. The potato marketing system is probably better worked out than that for any other farm crop. There are few associations handling potatoes, because nearly all the economies which the association method of doing business is able to secure have been already obtained in the matter of potato marketing. Of course, there are a few exceptions. There are local cash buyers in all the potato sections of the state. These men own or control frost-proof warehouses where the yields of the different farms are brought together, graded and housed into car lots. Then there are representatives for Chicago houses scattered all over the potato sections who are ever ready with checkbooks in hand to buy, grade, load and forward. Three important buying points in the state are Greenville, Hart and Traverse City. Potato marketing as now conducted in Michigan can be said to be efficient, at least on the whole.

Some special forms of marketing have been developed in connection with the dairy products of the state. The co-operative creamery and cheese factory are an old story. The farmers furnish the raw material, pay an expert to operating their plant, and divide the profits on a patronage basis. The method has continued so long and in so many different sections that the several steps in the process of converting hay and green grass into gold dollars is almost standardized. There are private plants as well as co-operative ones, but efficiency has been so highly developed that there is but little difference in the results of the two forms of marketing.

Live-stock marketing is rapidly going over to a co-operative basis in Michigan. This is because the methods which have prevailed in the past have been wasteful. The live-stock shipping association is one of the easiest to organize, most economical to maintain, and is the quickest to produce results. Little is required in the way of capital, almost any intelligent young farmer can be a successful manager, and the benefits of the co-operative activity are apparent the second day after a carload of animals have been shipped. There are many such shipping associations in the counties making up the southern tier. They are uniformly successful. This is the case because the farmer does for himself what in the past he has paid several others for prices for doing. The live stock is mostly shipped to Buffalo, where it is sold by brokers, and the charge is comparatively low. The returns are immediately distributed among those contributing to the different carloads. The saving in this form of marketing is the sum of the wages, expenses and profits of the men who formerly drove about the country putting bids on animals.

There are other marketing methods than those mentioned above but they apply to minor crops and do not concern the thousands of producers as do those described. It is likely that changes will occur in methods in the near future. For instance, there is the hint of a co-operative exchange that will control the output of the entire state. There is talk of a "grape-growers' federation. State certification of the quality of certain crops is now being tried in an experimental way. It is being urged that all peach growers should contribute to a general fund to be used in advertising that will increase the consumption of the Michigan fruits. And finally plans are being worked out for the standardization of all co-operative accounting, which means that as soon as comparative statements are prepared there will be a marked upward tendency in the efficiency of the marketing methods for Michigan farm crops are just on the verge of a big change.

R. H. ELSWORTH.

DADDY'S EVENING FAIRY TALE

by MARY GRAHAM BONNER

BULL FROG'S SPEECH.

"I am a very interesting Creature," said Mr. Bull Frog.

"No one says you aren't," replied Grandpa Frog.

"Well then," said Mr. Bull Frog, "if you agree that no one could say I was Uninteresting, why don't you go a step further, be more Polite, and say that I am Interesting?"

"Very well," said Grandpa Frog. "I will say you are Interesting. I would like to know though why it makes such a great deal of difference."

"It makes some difference to you, doesn't it," asked Mr. Bull Frog, "if People say you are Wise?"

"They can't help themselves," said Grandpa Frog. "They know I am Wise."

"That's because you've taught them to think so for such a great number of years. You have told them of Frog Family History, and how Interesting it is, and how Wise and Knowing you are. Now I intend to have them think me not only larger than an ordinary Frog, but much more Interesting. I shall leave out saying a word about you, and just talk about myself."

"Goog-a-goom-goog-a-room," said Grandpa Frog. "You are pretty fond of yourself it seems to me. And pray tell me, what are you going to say?"

"I shall tell them all that at first I am a Tadpole. That is Interesting. You see I won't mention a word about you."

"I see you won't," said Grandpa Frog, who was much amused at this Conversation.

"Then I shall tell them that I next belong to the Pollywog Family. And next comes a most Interesting Chapter in my Life."

"What do you mean by a Chapter of your Life?" asked Grandpa Frog. "It makes my eyes water to hear you talk in such a fine manner. I am not used to it."

"Cheer up," said Mr. Bull Frog. "You will soon grow used to it. I shall talk that way all the time."

"Oh dear, oh dear," said Grandpa Frog. "I do hope you will not talk that way with us. We all know about you."

"No, I will not talk that way before my Family or Relations. Family and

"I Am Going to Stand on the Old Stump."

Relations won't appreciate me—for they'll all be just alike. But you see by praising up myself I will be praising them up too!"

"Yes, that's true," said Grandpa Frog. "But you haven't yet told me what you mean by a Chapter of your Life."

"A Chapter in my Life," corrected Mr. Bull Frog. "A Chapter in a Book is a part of the Book—and a Chapter in a Life is part of the Life. See? Perfectly simple, isn't it?"

"Yes, of course," said Grandpa Frog, "when you explain it."

"And the Chapter in my Life which is so extremely Interesting," continued Mr. Bull Frog, "is when I change from a Pollywog into a Frog."

"I suppose," said Grandpa Frog, blinking his large eyes, "that you want to tell me so you will know how to Speak in Public. You will Practice on me, in short."

"Yes," said Mr. Bull Frog, "your are quite right. I do want to Practice on you, and see how my Speech sounds, for I am to give one down in the Creek this morning. I am going to Stand on the old Stump and tell them all who gather around that I shall Praise and Wait and hear them applaud."

Grandpa Frog gave a wide grin, and Mr. Bull Frog went on talking.

"I shall say next that I lose my Tail after this Interesting event and then my Hind Legs, and that then—then, I become a Bull Frog. And this last I shall say," roared Mr. Bull Frog, "in a very loud Voice, and I shall give a little Hop and Jump on the Stump to let them all know that that is the final ending to my splendid Speech!"

"How do you know anyone will listen to you?" asked Grandpa Frog.

"Because I have sold Tickets," said Mr. Bull Frog.

"How?" inquired Grandpa Frog.

"Admission to Lecture—two Bugs and plenty of Water to drink. I have offered them," said Mr. Bull Frog, "and I have sold every Ticket," he added proudly.

Papa Was Smart.

Little Harry had been presented with a toy gun on his birthday and within an hour he had broken it. After trying in vain to mend it he called to his father, who soon repaired the damage. "Papa," said Harry, "you are smarter than you look."

Old Italy.

Until 49 B. C. the name of Italy was applied to the southern extremity or "toe" of the peninsula. During the republic the area south of the Apennines was known by its present name before the entire peninsula was called Italy.

The HOME BEAUTIFUL

Flowers and Shrubbery—Their Care and Cultivation

An Attractive Arrangement of Plants in the House.

THE INDOOR GARDEN

By ELIZABETH VAN BENTHUYSEN.

I imagine that most of my readers are now having their joys and sorrows with the indoor garden—that sole substitute for the out-of-door, theater of the good months. But as half a loaf is better than no bread, so the pleasure of having a few flowers in the house during the cold months is worth all the time and trouble that it requires, and the added consolation is present that one need not be entirely without color and fragrance even though the winds are blowing a dirge outside.

There is hardly a real lover of flowers in the world who has not at least tried to make an indoor winter garden, some of us cling with more tenacity than others to the expedient, but sooner or later it comes to every flower lover as either a hope or a disappointment. I am convinced that where the latter state is reached it is through either ignorance or lack of patience.

The intimate association that one has with the few plants which may be nurtured throughout the winter makes them all the dearer. One becomes better acquainted with them. They become actually members of the family, and they take on the character of children as they are given more and more the sort of solicitous care that a mother might be expected to bestow upon an invalid child.

Light, moisture, warmth, fresh air and protection from insects are the prime essentials of the winter garden. Most flowering plants ought to have the full sun for at least a part of the day. A number of the foliage plants will do very well without the direct rays, if there be plenty of light.

The heat in the room where plants are to be kept must be under control so that a temperature of from 40 to 60 degrees may be maintained overnight. Even where it is only possible to maintain 40 degrees of heat most of the ordinary house plants can be kept, if they can be protected during especially cold weather from frost striking through the windows.

One often finds it possible to cut off a bay window, or other like window space, so that it may be sheltered by screens or curtains running well up to the ceiling. Thus the particular part of the room may be kept warmer at night and in an atmospheric state better suited to the plants.

Generally speaking, the question of proper moisture is the most neglected feature of the winter garden problem. It is a happy sequel that the problem is easily regulated. The greatest trouble is to know just what the plants require. Moisture in the air is just as essential as moisture on the soil. Steam heat and the improved methods for supplying winter comfort to people, takes the vitalizing element out of the air. It can be remedied by placing vessels of water on radiators, or near stoves where plants are kept in the room. The evaporation of the water attends to this necessary detail quite well.

In providing moisture for the soil it is likely that the amateur will overdo the trick more often than it will be undone. Many of the plants will take a winter snooze through the cold months and will require little soil moisture. Plants in bloom and in active growth, of course, require more. In many cases thorough drainage must be provided because a water-saturated soil will prove fatal and you must remember that it is quite possible to drown a plant.

Escaping illuminating gas or coal gas will poison your plants. They are very sensitive and must have air to breathe that is not polluted. A flower will discover gas poison before the average person will do so. Keep your plants clean. Insects thrive on dirty plants. They also propagate more rapidly indoors than out. Light spraying is almost a necessity.

Diversified farming may be the watchword of the time, but it is not the principle to follow in the house garden. To have a little of everything generally means that you will not have much of anything. The varieties must be limited. A number of plants of the same habit and color are much better than a collection.

Begonias will give a touch of color to the winter garden. A temperature of 55 degrees is required for them, and they can be propagated by tubers, leaves or cuttings. The gloxinia requires heat in the early stages. The easiest method of propagation is from tubers direct. The amaryllis, or hippeastrum, makes a handsome pot plant. Its flowers are large and they vary in tint. They require very little water to make a white success. The bantana requires a fairly warm spot for the best results, but it makes a fine plant for winter blooming. The spirea, with its creamy masses and delicate odor is always a valuable factor. Good drainage and plenty of moisture are required.

HOW TO GROW SWEET PEAS

By BETTY PAKE.

First of all select your seeds early and sow as soon as is possible in your particular part of the globe.

It is bad business to plant your sweet peas on the same ground successive years. If your garden is too small to allow of a change of site each year, remove the old soil and fill in with new.

This soil should be rich and deep and prepared early—the fall of the year is a good time—if this can be done. Dig into the ground thoroughly slaked lime and wood ashes.

The ideal soil for growing sweet peas is a good rich, turfy loam, thoroughly enriched with rotted manure or bonemeal, in proportion of three-fourths soil to one-fourth fertilizer, according to the condition of the soil.

In sowing the peas do not sow them too thickly or too thinly—a fair average is one package of seed to ten feet of garden—should the peas grow too thickly thin out to about two inches apart.

Pulverize the soil in the trench before sowing your seeds. To a depth of three inches see that the soil is exquisitely fine. Sow the seeds in double row about ten inches apart, about two inches below the surface.

Arrange brush for trailing the vines, the brush should run from five to eight feet above the ground. It is a good plan to arrange these supports when the seed is sown.

Sweet peas suffer from dry and hot weather. Water them frequently and thoroughly and give them an application of liquid manure once a week.

Apply a good heavy mulch of long-straw manure around the ground around the sweet peas, as soon as hot weather sets in. This keeps the ground from drying out and keeps the soil cool.

The life of the vine is greatly lengthened if every seed pod is removed as soon as they appear and by the constant cutting of the flowers.

A partial shade during the hottest part of the day is very essential to secure the best color in the blooms.

The greatest enemy sweet peas have is the cutworm and they often prevent getting a stand of good sweet peas. They usually take the young shoots as soon as they appear. Watering with limewater helps to keep out the cutworms. A handful of grass dipped in a solution of paris green will sometimes attract and exterminate the worms.

An Unusual and Artistic Planting Scheme.

LEARNING TO THINK EASILY

One Must Spend Much of His Time Alone If He Is to Acquire Habit of Productive Thought.

An important element in easy thinking is:

Opportunity for thought in time and in solitude.

Many of us are "too busy" but with far less productive things to really live or to really think. One should make time, make solitude for thought. People are often too much continuously together especially young people. Each individual is separate and requires individual separate thought.

One in general should room by oneself or else in some way manage to spend considerable time alone, along the seashore or brookside or in one's room. The gentle exercise of a stroll or of a slow bicycle ride requiring little attention to itself is our ideal stimulant and occasion for thinking, unless the attention wanders too much outwardly. Therefore time should be somehow had in which to be alone.

Schools are oftentimes too crowded to allow their students to think. One can afford as a matter of dollars and cents to make an extra year in school. If one can learn to think by doing so; the time so used is a rich and certain investment.

In default of better time, a half hour after waking and before rising is a good time to think, and many people have their most productive and original thoughts occur to them thus in the morning and early after a good night's rest.—Dr. G. Van N. Dearborn in Scientific American.

To Clean Copper.

Anyone who has ever tried to clean a copper wash boiler after suds have been allowed to stand in it will be pleased to know that kerosene liberally applied with a cloth will clean it. Use hot water and soap to wash away the kerosene and the boiler will be delightfully clean and smooth. This also applies to the scum which comes when using hard water.