

*Farmers' Co-operation
in Sweden*



The author and some friends

Farmers' Co-operation *in Sweden*

By ÅKE GULLANDER

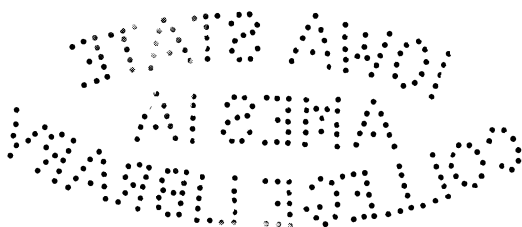
Swedish Farmers' Union (RLF)

1st American Edition



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Introduction

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THE PURPOSE of this chapter is to call attention to certain similarities and differences between Swedish and American agricultural and other conditions, to point out their significance, and to suggest questions with which the reader may approach the following chapters. He may find it particularly stimulating if he will read this chapter again after he has read all the others.

Readers of this volume should benefit from the insight which it gives into Swedish culture, traditions and circumstances, and the adaptations the Swedes have made to their environment.

Sweden, the Middle Way, by Marquis Childs, discusses primarily developments in co-operative purchasing of consumers goods by urban people, commonly called consumer co-operation. This book by Åke Gullander discusses primarily developments in co-operation among farmers. The two books thus present a well-rounded picture of co-operative developments in Sweden.

DIFFERENCES IN GOVERNMENTS

Some of the differences between Swedish and American co-operation may be attributed to varying political arrangements and governments. In both

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co-operatives and governments, however, these differences probably reflect more basic contrasts — cultural, environmental, ideological and circumstantial.

In political arrangements, Americans have thus far adhered fairly consistently to a two-party system. The tendency has been for the many special interest “pressure groups” to play one party against the other. In Sweden there are at present five parties. The cleavage among them to a considerable extent is based on special interests. For example, both laborers and farmers have organized themselves into separate political parties rather than relying upon other parties for adequate representation.

What has been the attitude of the government, particularly the present Socialist government, towards farmers, and how have the farmers' interests been affected by their direct participation in politics as a separate party? Why haven't Swedish farmers also seen fit to organize a co-operative party?

Swedish farmers also have a strong national Farmers' Union (a general farm organization) and in addition a national federation of farmers' co-operative associations, each of which maintains its separate identity. What is the division of functions between these organizations? How effective are they and how well do they get along with each other?

The Socialist party is now in control of the Swedish Government. Many Americans fear that co-operation and socialism are much the same thing, or that co-operation ultimately leads to state socialism. What are the facts regarding the relationship between agri-

cultural co-operatives and socialism in Sweden? Is this relationship likely to be any different in America?

Conditions in Sweden differ in many respects from those in America. Yet as one ponders the contents of this book, he becomes aware of the number of ways in which their conditions parallel or have paralleled those in the United States. The range of conditions in Sweden is amazingly great considering the size of that country.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Whereas farmers in the United States developed strong general farm organizations quite early, it was not until the early '30's that Swedish farmers formed a national farm organization (the Farmers' Union) corresponding in the United States to such organizations as the American Farm Bureau, the Farmers' Union, and the Grange.

There is a strong tendency for farmers in both countries to stress self-help co-operation. Swedish farmers probably have been more reluctant than American farmers to seek government help. Farming groups represent a relatively small proportion of the total population in both countries.

The MacNary-Hauganism and the Sapiroism of the '20's and the Triple A of the '30's in America had their counterparts in Sweden. Farmers there also believed that if they could only get well organized they might be able to say, "This is the price," instead of having to ask, "How much will you pay?"

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Just as in the United States, many factors have presented obstacles to the consolidation of small creameries, meat processing plants, etc., into large-scale and more efficient units. For example, Swedish agriculture and co-operatives have had to make adjustments to the development of good roads and truck transportation.

American farmers should be particularly interested in the experience of Swedish farmers with their co-operatives. Some will feel that American farmers can and should do everything the Swedish farmers have done. Others may insist that because there are differences in conditions, Americans can learn little if anything from Swedish experience.

Co-operatives, like any other institutional arrangement, must first of all have a definite purpose and meet recognized needs. Moreover, they must adapt themselves to economic, social and political situations and the temperamental, ideological, and general cultural characteristics of the people. The value of this volume is tremendously enhanced because Mr. Gullander presents much necessary background material in these respects.

Swedish farmers have much the same objectives and aspirations as Americans. They tend to be little given to theorizing, but to be intensely practical. Because of the stern necessities imposed upon them, they tend to exhibit considerable solidarity in coping with their common problems. They are also traditionally freedom-loving and individualistic, yet they ardently seek security. Since security and free-

dom are conflicting concepts, how have they resolved this conflict? Would Americans have done likewise under similar conditions?

Have Farmers' Co-operatives Abused Their Power?

The fear has often been expressed that comprehensive organization among farmers would lead to inefficiency and exploitation of consumers. Since Sweden does not have anti-trust laws, how are the interests of consumers protected? In America we also have those who believe in farm organizations strong enough to make control of the market possible (i.e., citrus fruits, cranberries, raisins, nuts, prunes, milk, etc.). During the '20's American farmers tried to apply similar methods to wheat, cotton, tobacco, and other products. In general, however, the objective of American co-operatives has been to set the competitive pace, rather than the trade union idea.

Swedish farmers seem to have achieved the desired results in rural electrification merely by collective bargaining. Could we have done likewise in the United States, without organizing co-operatives to distribute current?

Producer vs. Consumer Co-operation

Consumer co-operation in Sweden also is highly developed. Since the members of consumers' co-operatives consist largely of urban workers—who are primarily Socialists—they may secure the protection they deem necessary from a friendly government. In any case, American farm and co-operative

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leaders will be vitally interested in reading about the conflicts that develop between farmers and urban workers and between farmers' and consumers' co-operatives, and how these conflicts have been resolved.

SWEDES LEARNED CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Swedish farmers, like American farmers, have had to learn the hard way that successful co-operation entails responsibilities and obligations as well as privileges. For example, they have learned that the pooling type of operation eliminates the risks involved in the speculative, outright purchase of farm products by the co-operative. They have also learned that providing capital and patronage are important obligations of membership in co-operatives. At first, the Swedish farmers did not like these ideas, but apparently they now accept them, perhaps more generally than American farmers do.

Swedish farmers appear to have gone much farther than Americans in federating their local co-operatives into county, district and national organizations. For example, in Sweden, local co-operatives generally supply their local markets, but the selling of the excess over local needs is delegated to a district or national federation or union of co-operatives. Apparently there has been some objection among local co-operatives to such delegation, but they have thereby been able to gain some significant objectives. Of course, the handling of surpluses would present quite a different problem in the United States. Vol-

untary co-operation in America during the '20's proved inadequate to deal with surpluses. As a consequence, American farmers have since enlisted the aid of government in dealing with them.

CO-OPERATIVE PACKING PLANTS

In Sweden, as in Denmark, co-operative bacon factories came into being in response to the need to develop a foreign market for pork products, particularly bacon. However, during the '30's, the bacon factories began to take interest in the home market as well.

As is often the case, the pupil excelled the master. The Swedes carried the idea of co-operative slaughtering to cattle, calves, sheep, and horses, as well as hogs. The Danes felt that there was no place for co-operation in the slaughter of animals for the home market. However, co-operative slaughtering of cattle in Sweden appears to have achieved outstanding success from the beginning. By 1946 about seventy-two per cent of the hogs, cattle, calves, sheep and horses were slaughtered co-operatively by 25 co-operative slaughtering plants. All of these plants now slaughter all of these species of livestock.

Swedish cattle are almost exclusively dairy cattle, and therefore the cattle processed by the co-operative slaughter houses are primarily "worn out" dairy cows, and calves. Previous to the advent of the co-operative, these were bought largely by local butchers on a head basis. In America about half the cattle slaughtered also are dairy cattle. In earlier times

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they also were sold by farmers to a large extent on a head basis, and farmers often complained about prices received. American farmers, however, met the problem by establishing co-operative livestock marketing or shipping associations and co-operative sales agencies in terminal public markets. Through these the farmers were able to gain access to competitive markets, and received more nearly the actual market value of the cattle less the cost of transportation and marketing. Mr. Gullander's story reveals why these methods probably would not have worked in Sweden, and why collective bargaining (as applied in Sweden to electric rates, sugar-beet prices, etc.) might not have solved the problems of marketing livestock.

BUYING AND SELLING CO-OPERATIVES

The co-operatives which Mr. Gullander describes as "buying and selling" co-operatives apparently are to be distinguished from the dairy, egg, and livestock slaughtering co-operatives in that the latter operate on a "pooling" basis, rather than on an outright purchase and sale basis.

However, the buying and selling co-operatives also differ from the others in the commodities handled. That is, they handle not only farm supplies and machinery, but also grain. They thus resemble our farmers' grain elevator associations, which also handle a wide variety of farm supplies. Swedish farmers apparently have not developed co-operatives, such as we have, which are primarily, if not exclusively, supply purchasing organizations.

The Swedish farmers' buying and selling co-operatives apparently deal with their members on the basis of tentative or provisional price settlements at the time of the transactions — whether the settlements are made on the basis of current competitive prices, at cost, or on a basis designed to enable the co-operative to make a year-end distribution in the form of a patronage refund, is not clear. Strangely enough, patronage refunds are not mentioned in the book. How do the buying and selling co-operatives accumulate capital for debt payments and expansion? How are losses shared by members?

The explanation provided in a letter by Mr. Gullander is substantially as follows: When buying and selling co-operatives act as marketing organizations for wheat and other grains, small deductions are made from the proceeds, as in the case of dairy and packing plant co-operatives. However, in providing farm supplies, any net proceeds remaining at the end of the year are not distributed in cash but are applied on the members' unpaid capital subscriptions. In other words, patronage refunds are, in effect, paid to members in the form of shares of capital stock. Each member is required to subscribe for capital stock in proportion to his patronage. Any part of the subscription which is not paid in cash is paid by the application thereon of the member's share of the net proceeds. Members are responsible for any unpaid subscriptions. When a member ceases farming, his capital is refunded to him. Losses are met by drawing upon the available assets of the

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co-operative, and in extreme cases may impair the members' equity in share capital. It is not clear whether any part of the available assets is in the form of reserves set aside to cover contingent costs and losses.

An interesting observation regarding the Swedish buying and selling co-operatives is that patronizing them has in the past usually been optional with members, whereas in the dairy, livestock slaughtering and egg co-operatives, patronage was definitely an obligation of members. However, following World War I, many of the optional patronage co-operatives failed. When they began to reorganize, particularly when grain marketing was undertaken seriously during the '30's, obligatory patronage was substituted for voluntary patronage in order to permit better planning of operations and to reduce the risks of costs being high because of an inadequate volume of business. If acceptance of the obligation to patronize has been found to be a desirable practice in Sweden, why do so many co-operatives in the United States shy away from adopting it? Is it because Americans do not place sufficient emphasis on teaching the fundamentals of co-operation, or is it that the need to co-operate is not as urgent in the United States as in Sweden?

Education and Research

Teaching the principles and purposes of co-operation is a problem in Sweden as it is in America. Co-operatives in Sweden have had difficulty in get-

ting instruction in co-operation included in the schools. There was no instruction on this subject even in the agricultural college as late as the early '20's. Swedish co-operative leaders worry about the fact that the younger generation of farmers as well as the executives and particularly the managers frequently do not share the enthusiasm for co-operation that the pioneers of the movement do. American farmers and their co-operative leaders will be interested in what Swedish co-operatives have done about this problem.

CO-OPERATIVE UNIONS AND FARMERS' UNION

Readers may find it difficult to distinguish between the different kinds of "Unions" among farmers in Sweden. Each of the important specialized groups of local co-operatives, such as dairy, slaughter house, egg marketing, etc., are federated either into county or district societies or unions, and finally into a national union. There are 12 such national co-operative unions. These 12 unions in turn are united in a federation.

In addition to the above organizations, the farmers of Sweden have organized in most of their parishes a general farmers' organization. These parish organizations in turn are federated into district and county *branches*, and the latter into the National Farmers' Union. This setup corresponds to the American system of township, county, state and national farmers' organizations, such as the Farm Bureau, The Grange, and the Farmers' Educational and

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Co-operative Union. In the United States we also have regional, state, and national federations and councils of farmer co-operative organizations.

It should be noted that in Sweden neither the general farm organization (the Farmers' Union) nor its county or district branches themselves engage in commercial activities, as some American county and state general farm organizations do. The decision to maintain this separation of functions was not reached without considerable heated discussion. At first the majority of the Farmers' Union members felt that their organization should settle all of the farmers' problems. The reader will be interested to see how the problem of relationships was finally settled and the differences that have from time to time arisen between these organizations.

County Agricultural Societies

The National Farmers' Union in Sweden speaks for farmers in the sense that trade unions speak for working people. The trade union idea also appears to be the motivating philosophy of Swedish farmers in their co-operatives. This is reminiscent of the Sapiro philosophy espoused by many farm leaders in the United States during the twenties—which came to expression in the establishment of the Federal Farm Board and the promotion of "National Co-operatives." The Swedish Farmers' Union appears not to have had education for one of its major purposes while in the United States county farm bureaus were originally set up to serve as the edu-

cational arms of the agricultural extension services of land-grant colleges. In Sweden the counterpart of American county extension organizations consists of the county agricultural societies, which are maintained and conducted independently of the Farmers' Union and the co-operative unions or federations. These societies in Sweden were started 150 years ago, and were originally financed and controlled by their farmer members, but now are entirely financed by the government.

CO-OPERATIVE ORGANIZATION FEATURES

This book gives no evidence that the farmers' co-operatives of Sweden were patterned after the Rochdale plan, the principles of which have so frequently been cited as the Alpha and Omega of cooperation. On the contrary, until 1930, Swedish farmers patterned their co-operatives after the Danish plan. Since then, they have developed special adaptations to meet their specific needs.

Mr. Gullander's purpose in writing this book has been to present in broad outline form the general background and developments among Swedish self-help farmers' organizations. Consequently, only brief mention is made of organizational and operational features.

About the only reference to Swedish co-operatives doing business with nonmembers appears in a footnote, where it is mentioned as "unfortunately" existing in the buying and selling co-operatives. Apparently the dairy, slaughterhouse, egg marketing,

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and similar co-operatives transact business only for their members.

American co-operatives frequently experience difficulty in accumulating adequate capital. Swedish co-operatives seem to have little difficulty in this respect. Their methods of financing should, therefore, be of special interest to American farmers and their co-operatives. Apparently, the obligations of members to patronize and finance their co-operatives and to accept the risks and responsibilities of ownership and operation are now taken more or less for granted in Sweden.

Voting is generally on the one-man-one-vote basis, although voting on a patronage basis is apparently practiced to some extent in the slaughterhouse co-operatives.

American readers may be confused by the word "executive" used frequently in the text. The "executive" in Swedish co-operatives corresponds to the board of directors in American usage. There, as here, the members of co-operatives at the annual meeting elect the members of the board of directors, and the officers are then selected by the directors from among their number. The directors select the manager and other top employees, the other employees being selected by the manager. However, in the Farmers' Union (the general farm organization) the president, in addition to the other members of the board of directors, is elected by the members at the annual meeting.

Swedish co-operatives obtain their legal status

under a special law for the incorporation of co-operative societies. There are no antitrust laws in Sweden, the existence of which in the United States has necessitated special legislation permitting farmers to market their products through their co-operatives.

An Introduction To Swedish Farming

IN THE SUMMER of 1946 a study group of fifteen Young Farmers' clubs came to Sweden. Together with some countrymen of mine, I happened to take care of them during part of their visit. We were just going to have a look at the Halmstad Co-operative Packing Plant, the director and an assistant acting as guides. There were both boys and girls among the party and I thought that perhaps the girls, especially, would not like to see the actual killing. Consequently, I asked if anyone wanted to stay outside and join the others later on in the refrigerator and the sausage factory. Of course the boys did not mind going inside, and neither did the girls. They had been nurses or veterinary assistants during the war and were accustomed to the sight of blood.

No one but Jean, a farmer's daughter of twenty-one, from somewhere in England, had any objection. I quite understood her, for in spite of the fact that I am the president of that co-operative, I do not like to see the killing of animals. She stayed outside, and

sitting together on the steps of the office building we became rather good friends.

Some hours afterwards, when all that tiresome lecturing and looking around in every department was over, there was a rest. Then everyone was anxious to go downtown shopping. Many goods were still being rationed, but there were no shortages; and shoes, stockings, clothing, chocolate, etc., could be bought without any restrictions.

Jean and I walked around for an hour and a half. We passed through the old town gate dating from medieval times, and looked at the castle built by the Danish King Christian IV. It was erected when the southern Swedish counties belonged to Denmark, and is now the residence of the King's representative, the "Landshövdingen" or Governor, in the county of Halland. The actual "Landshövding" is a farmer from the Midlands of Sweden. We saw the old cathedral with beautiful red brickwork inside, and crossed a square where there had been a monastery during the catholic centuries. The foundations were marked in the pavement by the different color of the cobblestones. Last of all we went to the new town hall and looked at the interior, decorated with modern Swedish arts and craftswork.

I told Jean about all these things and how they were connected with our history. She got more and more surprised, and so could not help saying:

"Have you Swedish people really got a history and traditions and all that? I thought you had always been living a little outside the happenings and

events of the world. And you seem to have rather a developed social and industrial life too. I didn't know anything about all that."

I was just a little hurt. But taking everything into consideration, how could she or any of her colleagues know very much about our country far up in the North, its history and general conditions.

POPULATION AND GEOGRAPHY

When I started writing this book, many people from different countries came to see me. After reading the first fifty pages they usually said, "Well, it may interest our people, particularly the farmers who have much the same problems. But we do not know very much about Sweden and its farms. You should give some of this background before you go into details about Sweden."

There are roughly seven million people in Sweden, somewhat less than the population of New York City. The country is about the size of California — forty-one million hektar (103 million acres). Some 54 per cent of this area is covered by forests; 9.1 per cent is arable land, and 2.7 per cent grassland. The rest are lakes and streams, peat moors, bare mountains and rocks.

The landscape and character of the country vary quite a lot in different parts. In the south and part of the midlands there are fertile plains and a rather dense population. Comparatively few people live in the great northern part, most of that district being covered with woods, forests and mountains. The

density of population in the Skåne-Halland Plain in the south is 300 per sq. mile, but in the Alpine and Moraine District of the far north it is only 2 or 3 per sq. mile.

The latitude of the southern part is about the same as Alaska, and like that territory, Sweden stretches far up into the north beyond the Arctic Circle. Thanks to the Gulf Stream, however, the climate is surprisingly good, particularly in the South and the Midlands.

Because of the large number of rivers and lakes, there is a good supply of electric power. All the towns, villages and industries, the main lines of the railways, and most of the farms are now electrified.

There is a great difference in the length of the vegetation period between southern and northern Sweden. In the north this is partially compensated for by the permanent light during the summer nights. However, the short northern growing season limits the cultivation of many plants, even in the better districts of Norrland. Major crops of this area are grass and six-rowed barley. Potatoes also have done surprisingly well. Such crops as grains, beets, oil seeds, etc., do not flourish. Cattle raising and dairying will probably continue to be the essential agricultural industries of Norrland in the future.

History

Throughout Swedish history, the farming population has always been the backbone of the country. Even during medieval times the Swedish peasantry

had a love of freedom far exceeding that of their colleagues in continental Europe. Toward the end of the medieval centuries, Sweden was often occupied by German and Danish conquerors, and the peasants suffered under foreign feudalism.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the national heroes Engelbreckt, Sture, and Vasa aroused the peasants to arms, and threw off the foreign aggressors. Final liberation came under King Gustaf Vasa, who is considered the founder of the present national state (in the year 1523).

There was a tendency toward feudalism during the Swedish "great power" period of the seventeenth century. This influence came from Central Europe during the time of the Thirty Years' War. However, the Swedish peasants were never actually in villeinage. Working together under King Charles XI, they managed to throw off their yoke and remain free citizens.

NEW LAND POLICY

The most serious drawback to Swedish agriculture around 1800 was the splitting up of the farms into small strips of land. Frequently there were twenty or thirty to each holding, mixed in with the other farms of the village.

The first step towards a change from this was taken by a private individual. The government soon saw the advantages of his scheme, and through acts of legislation villagers were forced to move out to the open country with their buildings, where they got their land all in one piece.

There was tremendous opposition among the rural population to these compulsory methods, but these soon proved to be most efficient, and farmers stopped grumbling. The traditional community co-operation within the village was broken. This was in some respects a drawback, but the new scheme made better agricultural methods possible. Fortunately the reform was undertaken at this comparatively early stage. Certainly there would have been many more difficulties had the scheme been tried at a later period.

From 1800 to 1870 the acreage of cultivated areas trebled. Three factors intervened, however, to retard the further cultivation of new land: a more liberal customs policy was introduced into Sweden, the great transoceanic grasslands came into cultivation, and wheat and corn were imported from overseas.

At the close of the nineteenth century, dairying and animal husbandry became more predominant. Many improvements in agriculture were introduced during this period, such as drain tile, rootgrowing, machinery and implements, and better livestock. Our first farmers' schools and county agricultural societies were organized about this time. They helped to spread scientific information about agriculture among the farmers.

FARM FACTS

There are now about four hundred thousand holdings. However, many of these cannot be considered farms. Some craftsmen have only a cottage

and just a few acres of land as a supplement to their regular jobs. The number of professional farmers is much nearer 300,000. Division of the land into large or small units is dependent upon natural conditions, especially the topographical character of the land. Farms in the midlands and southern plains have on the average about 35 acres of arable land. In the forest districts of these same areas, this figure drops to 16 acres per farm. In northern Sweden, the average farmer cultivates only 11 acres of land. This brings the national average down to 22 acres; but if the permanent grasslands are included, the arable land figures increase 5 to 10 per cent.

No doubt the average unit is surprisingly small. As a matter of fact, this is one of the greatest problems of Swedish agriculture. It must be pointed out, however, that woods and forests supplement many of the holdings, particularly in the poorer regions. In many instances, farms form a supplement to forestry.

Before the war about 700,000 people were permanently engaged in agriculture. Their numbers are now growing smaller, but with the fishing and forestry industries they still represent almost 30 per cent of the total population. It is considered a great advantage from a social point of view that the holdings are owned and operated mainly by the farmers and their families. Nearly 80 per cent of the farmers are owner-occupiers, while hired men make up only 25 per cent of the agricultural population.

Milk is by far the most important Swedish farm commodity, producing nearly 50 per cent of the agri-

cultural income. In the poorer farming regions, where commercial crops cannot be grown successfully, milk is the mainstay.

Cattle

There are three breeds of cattle. In the south, the black and white Friesians give high yields but a comparatively low fat content. However, during recent years the fat percentage has increased considerably, and many of the good herds average nearly 4 per cent butterfat. In the midlands and in many other parts of the country, the Red and White Swedish breed predominates. They originated from native cattle, improved by mating with Shorthorns and Ayrshires. The breed has been constant for a long time, and now bears little resemblance to the Ayrshires. The Red and Whites may be called "the breed of the country." Their yield is quite satisfactory and so is the fat content.

In the northern part, the small Polled White Mountain Cattle are the most popular. Their yield is not so high, but their milk has a rather high butterfat content of about 4 per cent.

In Sweden the bulk of our herds are dairy cattle. They are all bred for milk and butterfat, and we are paid according to the fat content. The cattle population varies between 2,700,000 and 2,900,000, nearly two-thirds of these being milking cows.

The average yield for the whole country is 780 gallons per year. There are, however, about 350,000 recorded cows in the country, and these yield approximately the amounts listed on page 26.

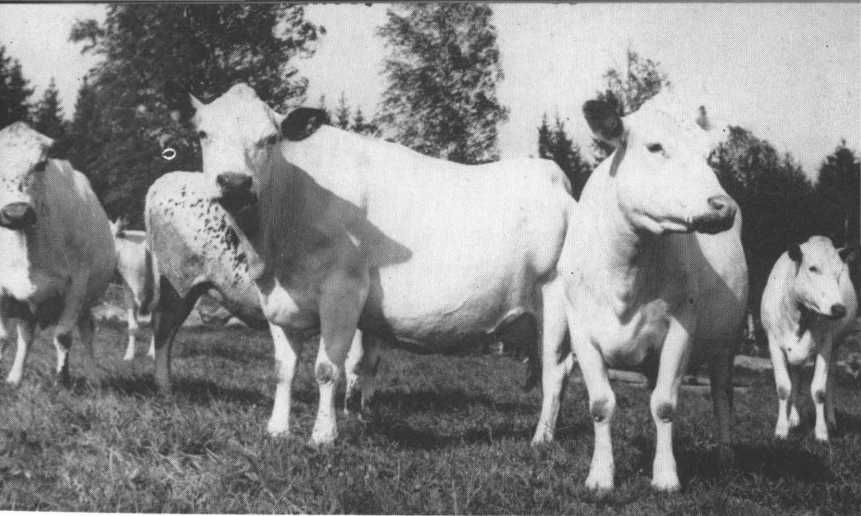
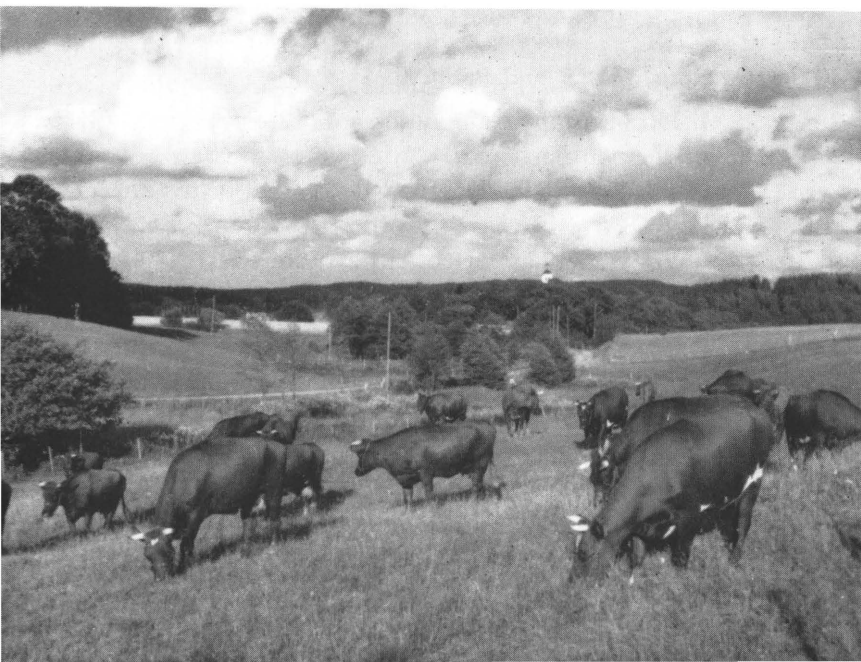


FIG. 1. White Polled Mountain cattle.

FIG. 2. A pedigreed herd of Swedish Red and White cattle.



	Milk Gallons	Fat Content per cent	Butterfat lbs.
Friesians	1,397	3.50	339
Red and Whites	1,111	3.85	298
Mountain Cattle . . .	778	4.00	218

These figures have been increasing steadily since the introduction of milk recording in 1898. During the war they dropped a little, but now have passed the prewar level in spite of the fact that concentrates are rather short and have had to be replaced by silage made after the Finnish AIV method.

Hitherto there have been no special beef breeds in Sweden, but during the last few years breeders have become interested in Aberdeen Angus cattle. About 500 of these animals have been imported into Sweden as an experiment, but it is too early to judge whether this will be successful.

Hogs, Sheep and Poultry

Hog raising is an important industry, particularly in the southern part of the country where skimmed milk from the butter-making dairies forms an excellent feed with a high protein content. Before the war, Sweden exported large quantities of bacon to Great Britain, but with the shortage of feed and rationing of meat and pork that is no longer possible. Consequently, the number of hogs dropped from 1,300,000 in 1935 to 1,000,000 in 1945. During the war the figure was much lower.

Because more of our farm land is now intensively

cultivated, sheep numbers have dropped considerably since 1870. At that time, the figure was 1,600,000, but in 1951 they numbered about 400,000. During both world wars there was a rise, owing to the shortage of wool, but the figure soon dropped again. However, sheep still play their part within Swedish agriculture, particularly in regions where natural conditions demand that farming be carried out on a more extensive basis. This is true, for instance, of large mountainous areas in the north and the Isle of Goffland where the sheep can be fed very cheaply during the summer season.

Poultry are far more important than sheep, particularly for the small farmers whose egg sales often form a considerable part of their income. In southern Sweden, geese and ducks are very popular, in accordance with the St. Martin's traditions. In the county of Skåne it is considered that on November 11 every family ought to have a goose on the dinner table. Should the family be a small one, they may choose a duck as a substitute. The people of Skåne are great lovers of good food, and there used to be a saying: "A goose is a good bird, but it has one fault. It is too big for one person and too small for two."

Horses

Swedish farmers have always been interested in horses and horse-breeding. In the southern plains and the midlands the Ardenner breed is the most popular. It originated in Belgium but has been bred

in Sweden for a long time. The Swedish variety is smaller than the original Belgian horse. In the forest districts, particularly in the north, the North Swedish Breed has done very well in recent years. It is a comparatively small, lively but good tempered horse especially adapted to hauling timber. In 1932 there were 612,000 horses in Sweden, but in recent years their numbers have been declining rapidly due to the increased use of tractors and machinery. Some farmers have been forced to sell their foals to the slaughterhouses because there was no other market for them.

Mixed farming — both animal and plant production — is the usual practice in Sweden. In certain southern sections the farmers concentrate on plants exclusively. However, most of the farm income comes from livestock in Sweden. This is especially true in

AVERAGE CROPS

	1901-05	1936-40	1941	1943	1945
<i>In Bushels Per Acre</i>					
Winter wheat	25.73	33.90	15.91	34.65	34.20
Spring wheat	20.67	26.91	19.18	21.56	23.79
Winter rye	22.94	29.32	21.83	29.79	26.29
Barley (Spring)	26.98	38.10	29.55	38.29	34.76
Oats (Spring)	32.48	51.02	34.29	41.26	39.87
Mixed grains	33.23	47.73	32.34	39.93	38.81
<i>In Tons Per Acre</i>					
Vetches	0.63	0.73	0.48	0.61	0.58
Potatoes	3.97	6.47	6.74	6.58	5.29
Sugar beets	11.96	16.10	15.39	16.56	15.61
Mangolds and other roots	8.02	17.08	14.86	15.66	15.64

the poor soil regions and in the north, where the short growing season limits plant growth.

Out of the 9,140,000 acres of cultivated land, 8 per cent is used for wheat (most of it winter wheat); 5 per cent for rye; 25 per cent for oats, barley and mixed grains; 7 per cent for potatoes and roots; 45 per cent for leys and permanent grass; and 10 per cent for fallow.

It ought to be pointed out that these figures are averages for the whole country. In the best agricultural districts, farms produce twice the amounts of grains, potatoes and roots mentioned. The sugar beet is grown only in the very best sections, and the figures may be reckoned representative of good farm land.

On the whole, it may be said that Sweden feeds herself, and that production and consumption of food balance fairly well. Before the war there was some export of animal products and an import, amounting to a few per cent, of cereals for bread-making.

WINTER FARMING

In spite of the fact that this subject matter hardly falls within the scope of this book, it seems worthwhile to mention a few facts about the effect of climate on our farming methods.

For a period of from 2 to 5 months of each year, depending on the latitude, the soil is frozen and lying quite idle. The growing period is consequently limited, and we can hardly take more than one crop a year. We also require stronger and better insulated farm buildings than in the southern countries.

Frost, however, is not always a hindrance to farming. Especially on clay soil it produces a fine structure for spring work and drilling. Formerly, when we used only horses for ploughing, the farmers were in a hurry during the autumn to get all of their land ploughed. The appearance of tractors has changed things a lot, and now there is not much risk of having any unploughed land when winter sets in.

Sometimes winters are so hard that wheat, rye, rape, fruit trees, and even whole orchards are killed. Fortunately this does not happen very often. Frozen water pipes and frozen mangolds are sometimes a problem, particularly in the south where there is not so much snow. An even cover of smooth snow is an excellent insulator.

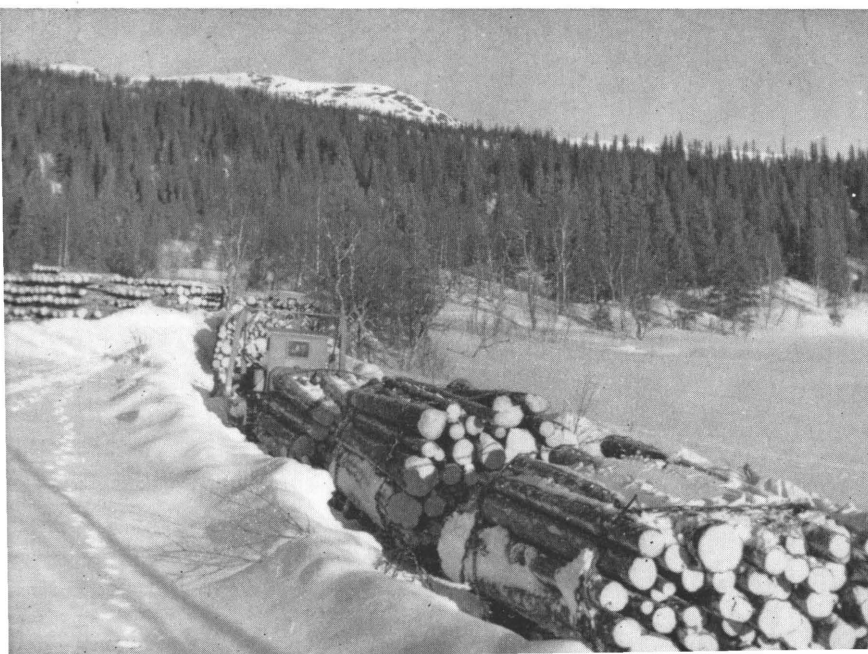
Snow drifts often hinder both rail and road traffic. I remember some periods in the early forties when we had to clear the roads every morning in order to bring the milk to the dairy. Excellent sledge roads and frozen lakes are typical of the winter landscape in these districts. There is a "permanent" snow for much of the winter season — which presents quite a contrast to the landscape and methods of transportation used during the summer.

Winter is forestry time in the north. While the fields are lying idle, the people go up into the woods to cut and haul timber. The small North Swedish horses are especially trained for hauling timber, and on ice-covered roads one horse may pull a load weighing up to five tons. If the hauling were done over bare ground, only a third as much timber could be moved per "horse power."

On the frozen lakes you often see tractors and horses hauling lumber and wood across “winter roads.” Using the lakes as highways makes it possible to reach islands and peninsulas which are inaccessible during warm weather. There is some danger in driving on the ice when it first starts to freeze, and again at the end of the season when the ice is porous and unreliable.

On one occasion, many years ago, I personally had some experience with this. It was at the end of March, and the winter that year had been a severe one. I was crossing a little bay with a team of horses. Suddenly the ice broke and the horses disappeared. There seems to have been a rather warm current

FIG. 3. Winter forestry helps supplement many farm incomes.



underneath, undermining the ice. Fortunately the bay was shallow, and the horses were standing with their heads above the surface. Some men on the shore saw the accident and came to my assistance. We managed to loosen the harness and pull the animals up on the side where the ice was thicker. I was afraid that the horses would catch cold, so I gave them a litre of brandy each, at that time considered an excellent medicine (now it is too expensive to be used for domestic animals). Then we rubbed them with straw and galloped them home to their stable. They didn't suffer anything from their cold bath, and when I asked the veterinarians why the horses did not get pneumonia they simply answered, "Why should they? There are no germs in this climate."

On the whole, we like a real winter, not only because we can do a lot of forest work, but also for the winter sports, of which skiing is the most popular. The young folks especially love the snow, and there are many winter traditions in Sweden such as the torchlight sleigh parties, etc.

Some Typical Swedish Farms

FARM A is situated in the southern-most part of the country, in the county of Skåne, which is the best agricultural district of the country. The soil is light clay in very high culture, comparatively rich in lime, and well drained with tiles. On the whole there is nothing but cultivated land in this part of Skåne, which is 6 miles southwest from the old university town of Lund.

The farm is just a little over 100 acres, all of it arable, with no forest. The farm buildings are half timbered, and although they have been standing for more than a century they have been modernized and kept in good repair. The 70-year-old manor house, built of brick, has central heating and other conveniences. Two other cottages are quite new and modern.

Before World War II the farmer operated on a 4-year rotation plan consisting of:

1. Winter wheat.
2. Sugar beets and mangolds, (mangolds on one-fourth of the field).

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3. Barley, which serves as nurse crop for the clover seeds.
4. Ley (1 year).

This was considered the most intensive kind of rotation and its use was limited to the very best parts of Skåne. Because of this intensive cultivation the crops never failed, and yields did not vary more than 20 per cent. The farmer could count on 55 bushels of wheat per acre, 78 bushels of barley, 40 tons of sugar beets and 50 tons of mangolds.

Thanks to the roots, and particularly the beet pulp obtained back from the sugar factory, the farmer kept a comparatively large number of cattle — twenty-four milking cows and sixteen calves and heifers of the Friesian breed. Before the war he also used large quantities of concentrates. The average yield of his cows was 1,440 gallons with a fat percentage of 3.60. It was not a pedigreed herd, but occasionally he sold some livestock.

In pre-war days he delivered 100 hogs a year to the bacon factory. These hogs were fed mainly on skimmed milk from the butter-making dairy, on barley and on imported corn.

There were four permanent workers on the farm, one team of working horses, a tractor, and gang labor for the sugar beets and roots.

This land is rather high-priced, selling for around \$385 per acre, and renting for \$24 per acre. During normal times this type of farm paid very well. However, it must be remembered that it is the best land in our country and very well managed.

The foregoing discussion refers primarily to the pre-war period. Since that time there have been a number of changes on this farm.

Sugar beets do not bring in a lot of money. Their value is in the by-products (leaves and pulp) and in the fact that they keep the soil in high cultivation. Because of the shortage of labor the farmer can now grow only half as many sugar beets, and no man-golds. This reduction combined with the shortage of imported feeds has forced the farmer to reduce the number of his livestock, particularly the hogs.

An even more serious problem is finding competent help for the cattle. One neighbor has been forced to send his cows to the packing plant and use commercial fertilizer on his soil.

Our farmer wants to keep the herd, but circumstances may force him to sell it. It may be possible to run farms without any stock for a number of years, but there is still the question of "the long run."

As a substitute for sugar beets the farmers of Skåne adopted the oil seeds such as rape, mustard and flax. These were introduced during the first years of the war and yielded magnificent crops at first. Various diseases and pests invaded the fields, however, and cut the yields considerably. Although the oil seeds still yield a higher cash income than the sugar beets did, they take more out of the soil and do not provide as many by-products.

Thus we see that even with the best land the farmer faces a number of problems.

FARM B

This farm lies in the midlands, in the county of Södermanland, ninety miles south of Stockholm. The land is clay, requires liming once in the rotation, and the major part is drained with tiles. The drainage system is old, however, and does not work too well.

It is rather a big farm for Sweden, and might be called an estate. There are 320 acres of arable land, 80 acres of cultivated permanent pasture for grazing, and 600 acres of woods.

The farm buildings — cowshed, stable, tractor garage, barn, and granary — are all new, and now under the same roof. They replace the original buildings which were destroyed by fire some years ago. Although the farmer received \$21,150 from his fire insurance, he had to pay twice that much for his present equipment. The new buildings, however, have increased the value of the farm, and are equipped with modern, labor-saving machinery.

The manor house is a little too big, judged by modern standards, and though it is well constructed it needs modernizing. Three of the cottages are quite up-to-date, and four older ones will be thoroughly equipped as soon as materials become available.

The labor problem has not been as acute on this farm as on Farm A. The owner belongs to the landed gentry and the place has passed from father to son for four generations. It is much the same with the workers' families, and there is a strong feeling for traditions and solidarity between owner and labor-



FIG. 4. A typical small farm of about 20 acres. Buildings have electricity and running water but no other modern equipment.

ers. Of course a lot of the younger people have moved away to the towns, but this is not as serious a problem as it is on smaller farms. There used to be twelve permanent workers, and there are at present eight. The modern buildings, tractors and combine have made it possible to save a lot of labor. There is no gang-work at all, as there are no people available for that. The workers are employed full time, working on the farm in summer and in the forests in winter.

The farm is run on a 7-year rotation:

1. Fallow (half of it bare, half peas and vetches for cutting green and making into silage) .

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2. Winter wheat and winter rye.
3. Oats. (Grass and clover seeds sown with the oats as a nurse crop.)
4. and 5. Ley.
6. Winter wheat, spring wheat or barley.
7. Oats or mixed grains.

Returns are considerably lower than on Farm A. The farmer is satisfied to get 45 bushels of winter wheat per acre, 70 bushels of oats, 40 bushels of rye or 46 bushels of barley, and about 33 bushels of spring wheat.

The livestock consists of seventy Red and White dairy cows and forty-five young cattle. The cows yield an average of 1,200 gallons, with a fat content of 4 per cent. Milk is delivered to the Stockholm Milk Center for direct consumption, and consequently there is no skimmed milk for hogs.

This farmer is a good exponent of rational farming. Under normal conditions he makes a profit, but his return is smaller than that of Farm A when you consider the difference in the size of the two farms. Also, between a third and a fourth of the income of Farm B comes from the forestry operations.

FARM C

This farm is situated in the poorer inland part of south Sweden, in the county of Småland. It has good moraine soil, is about 500 feet above sea level, and shows a marked need for liming. The drainage is partly tiles, partly stone drains, and some open ditches. Eventually all of it will be drained with

tiles. This is a typical family farm — about 35 acres are devoted to raising crops, and there are 10 acres of grazing land and 40 acres of woods.

The wooden buildings and farm house are old, and have no conveniences except piped water. However, all the buildings are well kept up.

The rotation is seven-course:

1. Roots, potatoes, peas and vetches for cutting green.
2. Winter rye, spring wheat.
3. Oats.
- 4, 5, and 6. Ley.
7. Oats.

The returns are lower still than on Farm B. Only rye, spring wheat and potatoes are cash crops. Everything else is used for feeding the stock which consists of two horses, nine dairy cows (crossbreds), four young cattle, four ewes, two breeding sows and seventy-five hens. The farmer usually fattens eight hogs a year; the rest are sold at 6 weeks.

Most of this family's income comes from their livestock. The woods are too small to provide much cash income, but they do furnish fuel for heating and wood for repairing buildings and fences.

The farmer and his family do all the work so there is no labor problem, except that the children often want to leave the farm and go into town as soon as they have finished school.

This is considered to be a fairly good sized farm, and in the government program, to be mentioned later, it is called a "base farm." The goal of future

agricultural policy is for farms of this size to have an income and standard of living comparable with industrial workers. This farmer's total income may at present exceed a factory workers' by 10 to 25 per cent — but he has much longer working hours, no holidays with pay, and can hardly leave the farm because of the animals. Also, his income covers not only his own work but that of his wife and his children. Under these circumstances the number of young people leaving the land is not surprising. If the wife of a factory worker takes a job, their combined income and living standard will far exceed that of the rural couple.

In the long run there may be more satisfaction in the work on the land — but the people do not seem to have discovered that yet!

It is only right that farmers should enjoy a higher standard of living, but this goal depends mainly upon a long-run increase in the prices they get for their products.

FARM D

This is in the northern part of the midlands, where neighbors are few and much of the area is covered with forests. The 18 acres of this farm are comparatively good soil (clay-moraine), and both buildings and land are well kept. Livestock furnish the main source of income since there are no woods on this particular farm. However, the farmer occasionally earns some money hauling timber in the woods belonging to one of the big woodpulp companies.

The farmer and his wife, who are in their late fifties, are alone on the farm. Their five children have gone to the town and taken industrial jobs.

Because of its small size this is a submarginal farm. The old couple love their land and their animals, and do not object because their living standards are much lower than in the urban areas — but the next generation will not be satisfied.

This problem might be solved by increasing the size of the farm, but arable land is at a premium in this district. Another solution would be to let the farmer have say 125 acres of woods. This would keep him and a son, and several horses, busy all year around.

Farms vary widely in our country and it has been possible to give only a few examples. They have been chosen in order to give some background to what follows. The descriptions mostly concern present time or the period before the recent world war. We must keep in mind that most of the farms are small; big holdings are rather rare.

Before the Start of Farmers' Co-operation

TWO PERIODS are of particular interest in the history of farmers' co-operation in Sweden. One came at the end of the nineteenth century, and the other during the early 1930's.

Agriculture, and especially livestock production, was expanding very rapidly at the turn of the century. Because grains were being imported from overseas, Swedish farming shifted its emphasis to milk, butter, hogs, and poultry. This change was accelerated through the introduction of better farming methods and improved feeds by the county agricultural societies and the farming schools.

Margarine was put on the market about this time, and because of its cheapness and the effective way in which it was advertised, it sold quite well among the lower income groups.

Dairy Co-operatives Founded

A surplus of dairy products soon developed in Sweden—the same problem that the farmers of Denmark were facing. World markets for dairy products had to be found, but the first export at-

tempts were not too successful. Exporters soon found that prices were not the sole determinant — buyers demanded high quality and a standardized product.

Up to this time the Swedish people had not paid much attention to the quality of their dairy products. Take, for example, butter. Much of the milk left over from consumption needs was processed into butter. The homemade farm butter varied widely in water content, flavor, taste, color, and age when marketed. Butter turned out by small dairies and creameries was probably better than the homemade, but there was still no guarantee of quality or condition.

Butter could not be exported under these conditions, and on the home market the standardized product, margarine, offered serious competition.

Danish farmers had already solved this problem by establishing dairy co-operatives, and the Swedish farmers followed suit. The Danes were ahead in this field because their high production had brought the problem to a head years before the Swedish output became significantly large.

The first Swedish co-operative dairy started in the 1880's, and was soon followed by a number of others, particularly in southern Sweden. These co-operatives were successful in standardizing buttermaking, and exports grew from year to year, making milk production more profitable.

Co-operative Bacon Factories Develop

Development of bacon factories proceeded on similar lines somewhat later. The great quantities

of skimmed milk from the co-operative dairies led to a rapid rise in the production of hogs. The ordinary taste in Sweden was for large, fat hogs, but there was a wide difference in size and quality.

Because of the surplus which arose, some individuals tried to export bacon, but without success. There was a lack of uniformity both in the types of the hogs and in the methods of curing bacon. Here again the idea of co-operation came from Denmark. Some people from the Halmstad district went over to Denmark to study the co-operative bacon factories. They realized that there was a market for bacon, particularly in England, and that the Danish factories were doing rather well.

They discovered, however, that Swedish farmers would have to change their feeding methods and breed of hogs if they were to compete for the export trade. Farmers were taught new feeding techniques, and the breeders concentrated on a long, lean hog, suitable for bacon curing. This breeding is still being carried on.

The Halmstad people were able to form the first co-operative bacon factory in Sweden in 1899. In spite of hard competition from a private firm in Hälsingborg, the co-operative was surprisingly successful. Previously, prices had fluctuated widely, sometimes falling as low as \$2.00 per hundred pounds. The co-operative, by eliminating the middlemen's margin, was able to pay its members \$7.00 per hundred. There were 1,100 members to start with and some 7,840 hogs were killed and cured the first

year. These figures rose rapidly during the following decades. However, the existence of only one co-operative bacon factory kept all prices on a fair and reasonable level. This lasted 10 years until the next one was formed. Then factories came into southern Sweden, and before long most of the export business was carried on by the co-operatives.

Another method of agricultural co-operation should be mentioned — the buying and selling co-operatives. Their main function was cutting the margin of the middlemen. Farmers previously had no control over the price or quality of artificial manure, oil cakes, and other such supplies. The first co-operatives of this kind formed during the nineties, and combined into a national union in 1905.

During this period the co-operatives engaged mainly in export trade, paying little attention to the home markets. Farmers prospered under this system until the outbreak of the first world war. The high prices and deflation that followed as an aftermath brought bankruptcy to many farmers and to some of their co-operatives.

Once again production recovered, and a surplus of food developed, leading to the world crisis of 1930. This brought Swedish farmers lower prices, and many of them operated at a loss each year. During the worst period, milk sold for 5 cents a gallon and a fattened hog for \$8.70. The bottom fell out of the export market even though people in many countries suffered from malnutrition and even starvation.

Hitherto co-operative ideas had come from Denmark. Now there was a change. Sweden was developing into an industrial country with a large urban population and an increased market for foods. We began at last to consider the home market and realized that very much could be done there, most likely through co-operative activities.

THE FIRST CONFLICT

This affair started some years before the appearance of the Farmers' Union, but was not definitely settled until after the union was in operation. The background was as follows:

When I started as a farmer I soon realized that the rates for electric current were extremely high. It is sometimes difficult to translate a Swedish text into English, but it is still worse to translate measures and prices. It is enough to say that in 1927 the electric current on the farm cost me \$520 a year. In other words, every 3 months I had to send to the butcher one cow and one rather big heifer in order to pay the electricity bill.

The conflict started among the farmers belonging to a distribution network in Harplinge, not far from my farm. The contracts of some 150 farmers with the electricity company were running out at the end of 1927. The company was a large one, carrying on the business throughout most of our county and in other counties as well.

We had consulted some electricity experts, and therefore knew that the company could sell at lower rates without risking a loss. Two representatives

went to the managing director and suggested a negotiation about the rates.

"We can't sell one öre cheaper," was the answer. They tried several times, but without success.

All the farmers met again in Harplinge, and resolved that they could not possibly sign new agreements on the same basis. We decided to call a strike against the use of electric current, and the strike went into effect on New Year's, 1928. There was much discussion in the press about that strike. The idea had never occurred to most people that a strike could be established by anyone other than laborers' trade unions — by consumers in fact.

There was a boom in gasoline lamps as we tried to solve our power problem in different ways. A few people on the Harplinge network did not join our action. They pretended they could not do without electricity, and could not find their kids in the dull light of oil lamps. Most, however, were very active, and we helped each other with tractors and engines. I did not realize it, but I must have taken a considerable part in our efforts, for I remember one lady of the nonstrikers once saying to me, "Mr. Gullander, you have not got your right place. You shouldn't be a farmer. Instead, you ought to become a communist agitator. In that line you would, no doubt, have a glorious future!"

As time went on the company did not seem willing to give up their position. We represented only a small part of their total consumption, and they were not concerned with a minority.

In the meantime, however, farmers all over the

county of Halland were organizing into the Farmers' Union. Several years after the Harplinge action was started, many farmers all over the district were in the same position — their contracts with the company were running out. Their electricity rates were not as high as ours, but there was a strong desire for a better agreement for the rural population. Townspeople had very cheap rates, however. These were worked out on a modern basis, which stimulated the use of electric power.

The Farmers' Union county branch asked the company to negotiate the electric rates. This was in the spring.

"We are very sorry," said the company, "but we have nothing to negotiate about. Prices are fixed; there is nothing we can do about it."

"Well," said Daniel Svensson of Björnås, farmer and expert on these questions, "we shan't take up your time any longer, but we shall take further steps."

The director smiled a little, and the farmers' delegation left the office.

During the following months Daniel was quite busy. He distributed forms to all the rural consumers of electricity, in which they gave our union the right of negotiating for them. If the union was not able to come to an agreement with the company, the people pledged themselves to join the Harplinge strike. He got nearly all the forms back with signatures.

In August, several weeks before the contracts were due to expire, officials of the company arranged to meet with Daniel. At the start, the position of both parties was very difficult and negotiations nearly broke down again.

"Well, gentlemen," said Daniel, "I have some papers here which may be of some interest to you," and he opened his bag, containing thousands of the forms mentioned above. The directors looked at each other, but they did not smile this time.

As a result, the parties finally agreed on a figure which was between one-half and two-thirds of the previous rates. However, it was worked out on a thoroughly different basis, stimulating the use of electric power.

"There is only one thing to add before we sign," said Daniel, "this agreement includes the farmers of Harplinge."

The directors looked as if they had been stung by a bee, but answered, "Well, there is nothing to be done, we accept even that."

This business had proven the value of co-operation and collective action.

How Co-operation Was Brought About

IN 1926 I STARTED as a tenant farmer at Bårarp, in the county of Halland, in southwest Sweden.¹ I was rather well prepared for my future job because I had had some years of practice on prominent farms in the middle and south of the country. I also had attended the Agricultural College of Alnarp.

I soon realized, however, that there was something missing in the education given at the college. I do not mean that some of the professors were not actually good teachers. Such things, I imagine, happen in every school or college. What I mean is that we were not told anything about farmers' co-operatives and organizations. It is true that the co-operatives were not as widespread as they are now, but in 1922 a number of them did exist, particularly in the dairying field. There were also bacon factories and buying and selling co-operatives, most of them in the south. They

¹ A Swedish county is usually larger than its American counterpart. For administrative purposes Sweden is divided into 24 counties, or län.

worked independently, often in hard competition with each other. I therefore think we should have been given instruction about co-operation. Now that agricultural education has been reorganized, it is different. Farmer's co-operation forms an important part of rural economics.

During my years at Alnarp there was a difference of opinion between growers and the factories as to the right price for the sugar beet crop. There were negotiations, but the parties could not agree, and the farmers refused to produce for the price offered by the company.

I shall not discuss, so many years afterwards, whether the farmers were right in their claims or not, but I still have the impression that solidarity within a group is a very good thing. Our professor, however, did not think that way. During one lesson he told us: "It is stupid of the growers not to accept. Never forget, boys, that farmers cannot co-operate. There is nothing to do but to accept what the factories are offering. I have a holding myself, and I am just going to sign the contract."

I never forgot these words — but I am glad to say that later on they were proved to be quite wrong.

When I started farming there was no question about joining the farmers' co-operative dairy in the village of Getinge. It was a rural district and there was no other satisfactory way of selling our milk. Thanks to good management, the local co-operative dairies were able to pay a fair price. But through competition when marketing the produce, the co-

operatives themselves pushed the prices downward. The bigger farmers often sold their milk directly to consumers, although the retail business in the towns was run largely by private companies. An exception to this was Stockholm where a large co-operative milk center existed.

Farmers who sold their milk direct were looked upon with disfavor by the rest of the dairymen. There was a growing belief that all milk for direct consumption should be retailed through the co-operatives even though there was more money in retailing than in selling to the co-operatives.

During the first years of my tenancy I made a profit, partly because of the good crops and partly because of comparatively good prices. During the early thirties, however, the food surplus and falling prices made the accounts show a loss.

THE FARMERS' UNION APPEARS

One day in the autumn of 1930 my neighbor and friend, Baron Gustaf Hermelin, called me on the telephone: "You are going to have dinner with me and some colleagues of ours tonight."

"Well," I answered, "I have no objection."

"After that," he continued, "we will go down to the village and listen to a lecture by a Mr. Levin. He is traveling around, lecturing on something called Farmers' Union (RLF). It is a new organization which is going to help us out of the agricultural crisis."

"Listen!" I replied, "I am coming to your dinner party."

We had a splendid dinner and a very nice time. Hermelin had all the traditions of the landed gentry and he knew how to arrange a meal. There was, however, a feeling of insecurity over the whole. All of us knew that in the long run it would be impossible to go on with farming on the present basis; something had to be done if our industry was to survive. It might come as a government scheme, or still better — from our own efforts and co-operation.

Hermelin always had ideas in his head, and was able to make suggestions. He had a strong feeling for both the economic and social side of agricultural life. A man of quite a different type was Mr. Juel, one of the biggest and most prominent farmers of the whole county. He looked at everything from a feudal-commercial point of view. He had no interest in social things, and did not feel inclined to mix with people other than his own equals.

Juel was not at all interested in listening to the lecture by Levin: "Do you really mean," he said, "that we shall go down and hear that man . . . I have forgotten his name?"

"Levin," said Hermelin, "and you particularly need to listen to him, if you want all your big farms to pay."

I do not think that anyone but Hermelin could have induced Juel to join us at the small and rather shabby hotel in the village.

Levin was the perfect orator, but not at all a tub thumper. That was why we were so deeply affected by his talk. Never before had we heard a lecture of that kind. He was speaking about collaboration of

any kind between farmers (collaboration, of course in the old meaning from pre-war times). When selling our products we ought to say, "This is the price!" he suggested, and not ask, as we are doing, "How much do I get?"

"This," he said, "all the others are doing — the baker, the barber, the industrial laborer, etc. All of them have fixed their prices. Through an organization, for example the Farmers' Union, we could fix them as well, and at an amount that would make farming pay."

I am sorry to say there were some gaps in his reasoning. Levin did not mention anything about what to do with the surplus — at that time the greatest problem within the farming industry — but we hardly noticed it.

The discussion started, and a very animated one it was. At that time we were rather inclined to think about the world market as the only way of fixing prices. We thought it almost impossible to have different prices at home and for export.

Levin answered, "As for milk and butter, how much of the total milk production do you export as butter?"

"Fifteen per cent" was the reply, "and the price obtained for butter in England is very bad nowadays."

Levin continued: "Is it really necessary that this low export price should dictate the prices for the home market? Aren't you farmers the only group in this country who are looking so devoutly at the

world market? And do you really believe that the Swedish community would be able to go on without the farming industry?

“Do you really think the bricklayers, the carpenters, the contractors and all the others are discussing the import of cheap labor from China, Africa, etc., to keep all prices on a low level? I will tell you: No! But you have no objection to the import of cheap wheat and cheap raw materials for the margarine factories on an unlimited scale. All that will help to keep the prices of your own products down. You farmers simply must learn to get together and stick together. Look at the trade unions — what haven’t they achieved through their organizations!”

I have already mentioned that there were some flaws in Levin’s argument, but in many respects he was quite right. He had given us a lot to think about. If united, the farmers would have a lot of power within the community. At the time, the way in which we were to accomplish this was not clear. But in later years the development of the Farmers’ Union proved to be the most effective means of working together.

Local Branches of the Farmers’ Union

The result of the meeting at Getinge was an interim committee for forming a local branch of the Farmers’ Union. Hermelin became chairman, but Juel did not join — he did not care for the atmosphere and did not want to mix with the small farmers and peasants.

Each of the committee members went around with his list in his special district. House-to-house agitation is usually a hard job, but not this time. Most of the farmers felt that something must be done, and they joined our local branch without much discussion.

In the same way, local branches were formed in nearly every parish of the county of Halland and throughout the whole country. In due course, district and county branches were established — all linked together in the national union, with headquarters in Stockholm.

At the start, all work in the Farmers' Union was voluntary and without pay, but this proved impractical. Before long we engaged a permanent secretary who did much of the office work as well as supervising the whole and acting as an organizer. For that job we got a very able man, Karl Berntsson, with whom I worked for many years. The farmers had entire faith in Berntsson, so that he was able to settle almost any difference that appeared. He left some years ago for a position in the headquarters of the union.

During these first years I could not help thinking of the words of our professor at the Alnarp College. "Farmers cannot co-operate!" Could he possibly be right? Personally I did not believe so — but the union had not yet had any real test.

Farmers' Union Aims and Organization

I HAVE TRIED TO SHOW the origin of the Farmers' Union movement from the local and the farmer's point of view. Now I shall attempt to show how the whole is knit together on a national basis.

In 1929 a handful of men met at Sångä-Säby, now the Idea School of the movement, to draw up plans for a farmers' union.

In order to publicize the new organization, many lectures were given, and later a weekly journal was started. In order to raise funds for the movement, many of the pioneers guaranteed loans to the organization. However, more money was needed, and out of this came the much criticized "Oil Affair."

The executive committee sold editorial space in the union's journal to an oil company. Naturally, the opposition to the movement was indignant about this, and made much to-do about it. They were quite right, but what else could the executive have done? Now, we can criticize their methods, but at the same time I think we should be grateful to them

for keeping the organization running until a regular income was established from the members' fees.

At first, the leaders thought that the union should have jurisdiction over all marketing operations. Co-operatives were considered unnecessary. However, they soon discovered that the union was not organized to handle the problems of collecting, distributing, and processing farm products. There were violent discussions at the union meetings about the advisability of establishing co-operatives. Finally, a rule was passed that one of the most important aims of the movement was to establish co-operatives and support them in every way.

RULES AND STRUCTURE

Rules are necessary in any organization, but they are not very entertaining reading, and at first I did not intend to discuss them. In order to get a picture of the whole, I am giving the essential points.

In the local branches of the Farmers' Union every member has the right to vote, irrespective of his acreage or delivery capacity. At the annual meeting a chairman, secretary, and treasurer are elected. Delegates to the district branches are also elected. These local delegates constitute the annual meeting of the district branch, which in turn elects an executive as well as delegates to the county branch and to the union.

The county branch annual meeting consists of delegates from the district branches, who elect a county executive and also delegates to the union.

The county branch does most of the work and carries a paid staff — at least a secretary, but there also may be one or two typists. In the county branch there is a register of all members (also all nonmembers who ought to be acquired as members). This register also records whether the farmers belong to the different co-operatives. It is quite a task to keep the register up-to-date, and this is done by working closely with the co-operatives.

Delegates to the annual meeting of the union constitute the highest authority of the Farmers' Union. Previously, these meetings took place once a year, but they are now generally held once every two years. I suppose we will have to call them "conferences" in the future. Extra meetings can be called when important questions arise. The union conference elects a president and vice-president — but I will return to the union and its headquarters later.

There is a question within the Farmers' Union whether both district and county branches are necessary; in some sections they only have the latter, and I personally think that is the best plan for the future.

Membership Fees

Fees are calculated roughly according to the acreage of each member. They have to pay about five cents per acre. The amount is so divided that the local branch keeps one-third for its expenses; one-third is handed to district and county branches, the major portion going to the county; and one-third goes to the union.

Fees are usually collected by the local dairies, to which most of the farmers belong, by deductions from the farmers' accounts. This is a good system, because it is difficult to run about and collect money from individuals.

In many respects the structure of the co-operatives is the same as that of the union. Co-operatives get the necessary capital by small deductions from the accounts — in the packing plants two-tenths of a cent per pound, in other co-operatives something corresponding. Farmers hardly notice these small sums, but in the long run they form considerable amounts. On the whole, the financial position of the farmers' co-operative movement is very good. The co-operatives generally started with nothing and had to borrow from the banks. Most of them have now paid back all their loans, and besides have capital of hundreds of thousands or millions of kronor, depending on their size and annual turnover.

Qualifications For Voting

Within a co-operative the highest authority is the annual meeting, where each member has the right to vote. Should the co-operative be a large one, it is necessary to recognize districts where the members can elect delegates to the annual meeting. The principle, however, is quite distinct: One man, one vote, independent of delivery or acreage.

There are a few exceptions to this rule. I know, for example, of one packinghouse co-operative where the right of voting is according to the quantity delivered. Previously, there were more of that kind,

but they are rapidly changing. There is a popular saying in this country among the organized farmers: "It is the man who ought to vote, not the beasts."

I can understand big farmers wanting the voting right according to a scale, because of their larger responsibility and greater production. On the other hand, the system of one man, one vote has proved favorable in many respects, and would seem to be more democratic.

The annual meeting elects an Executive, including a chairman and vice-chairman. The Executive has to engage the managing director and other employees necessary for running the business. The co-operative markets its products in the home district and places the surplus at the national union's disposal for selling in the bigger towns (in the respective branch — dairy, packinghouse, eggs, etc.). The annual meeting also elects delegates to the national union (relative branch).

There may be in the dairy organization, for example, an intermediate station between the co-operative and the national union, known as the district union. Delegates also must be sent there from the co-operative.

PRESIDENTS OF THE UNION

The position as president of the Farmers' Union was an outstanding one. Usually the president was the center of the movement, and when it came to fighting of some kind he was always in the middle of the battle.

The first to hold the presidency for a long run

of years was C. G. Johansson, Lövnäs. His importance as a leader of the movement can hardly be overestimated, and I think it worth while to try to give a portrait of him. He was a small farmer from the county of Dalarna, which is famous in Swedish history for its love of freedom. He had shown his capacity for the work by organizing the big co-operative dairy association in his own district.

During one of the most stormy annual meetings of the union the acting chairman entirely lost control over the audience. Lövnäs was then vice-chairman of the conference, but we did not know much about him at that stage. He took the chair, and through the strength and firmness of his manner was able to quiet the representatives and bring the conference to a happy end. It became clear to all of us that he was the man we needed as president of the union; and at the next conference, six months later, he was elected.

Lövnäs was not a man of book learning. He had acquired his knowledge from life itself. When speaking to official groups he was quick to claim the farmers' rights, and he was successful because the farming group was solidly behind him.

Lövnäs was a bit of a demagogue, and often oversimplified problems. One of his favorite sayings which always drew thunderous applause was, "I want the Swedish flag to stream over farmers' homes without any debts."

This sounded very well, but as any farmer knows, it is impossible and not even desirable. Under such

conditions how would it be possible for a young man to start farming? Most of the farmers in Sweden are owner farmers, and consequently need a comparatively big amount of capital investment.

Lövnäs was a first-class debater. It was a pity for any poor fellow to go up against him in a discussion when he was in good form. I know that myself from bitter experience!

Lövnäs and the union's vice-president had given interviews to two different newspapers belonging to different political parties. In their announcements these gentlemen had been quite opposite to each other concerning an essential question within the movement. There had been an awful fuss about that, and during the conference I went in to the attack, particularly against Lövnäs. I criticized very strongly the lack of co-operation between the two most prominent men of the union. If I may say so, I made one of the best speeches in my life. Standing on the platform and looking out over the audience, I felt how they started listening, how the interest was steadily increasing, and how the majority completely agreed with me. At the end of my talk there was a lot of applause, and some delegates came straight up to me saying, "Splendid!"

After that came Lövnäs. The audience was dead silent, one could hear a needle fall on the floor. Everyone was curious about how the president would defend himself. He did it in his own way. First a few words against my attack, then he turned his speech to other things.

He was a first-rate orator and actor, and so brilliant was his performance that the audience forgot my arguing a few minutes earlier. When he finished the big hall shook to thunderous applause. No one asked to speak, the affair was settled and Lövnäs had won a complete victory.

After that defeat my own position at the conference was not very agreeable. But I think that Lövnäs in the future took some notice of my criticism.

In spite of this I liked Lövnäs very much. We all knew he did a splendid job in the service of the union and the farmers of Sweden. I may have pointed out some of his faults, but I am sure you will be able to read about his good qualities between the lines. When it came to government committees with lots of figures, statistics and investigations, Lövnäs failed. Arguing with economists and professors was not his line.

Bernhard Ekstrom

A man of quite another type is our current president, Bernhard Ekström, not nearly so self-conscious, but with rather a tendency for understatement. He was a successful farmer from the county of Småland, in the poorer part of south Sweden.

Ekström received only an ordinary school and farmers' school education. However, he studied a lot after leaving school, and was well aware of the value of education. Ekström is a giant of a man, rather modest, and formerly somewhat shy. However, he has overcome his shyness through the many speeches

he has made to farmers — and certainly he can persuade them as no one else can.

On one occasion a group of farmers refused to deliver their milk to the dairies because of a price dispute. The government asked Ekström to enter the negotiations after the efforts of union officials had failed.

Ekström spoke to the irritated farmers, outlining the problems facing both sides, and the rules that should be observed in conducting negotiations. Because of their faith in Ekström, the farmers followed his advice, and the dispute was settled peacefully.

Lundgren and Svensson

A man of still another type is the union's former general secretary, G. Lundgren. He too is among the pioneers and has been in the service of the movement almost since the start. He is both able and clever, but rather a hard man. He knows well the business of negotiating with the timber companies about hauling and cutting. He is stubborn and obstinate, and he does not think that anything is worth having unless it is part of the Farmers' Union. He and I have often had differences, but I still recognize that he is of utmost value to the union and the farmers — and what is worth a good deal, he has a strong sense of humor!

Lundgren is still in the service of the union as a specialist on certain questions such as tenants' leases and negotiations between truck gardeners and canning factories.

The present general secretary of the union, N. A. Svensson, was formerly a farmer and a lawyer. This type of background fits him quite well for an officer in our movement. Svensson has taken a great deal of interest in farmers' international activities, and his knowledge of languages and economic and social conditions has been of great value to us.

At headquarters we have a rather large staff because of the amount of work handled by this office. Every member of the union is registered, and reports are sent to and come from the branches. There is also "R.L.F.-tidningen" (the Farmers' Union journal), a weekly paper dealing with happenings within and outside the movement.

The members of the Union's Executive are all farmers, large or small and representing all parts of the country.

ACTIVITIES OF THE FARMERS' UNION

Many problems fell within the scope of a county branch. People frequently asked for support in differences between themselves and insurance companies, machine firms, etc. Many times our people were wrong and we could not do anything. But we had quite a job convincing them they were in the wrong at the moment. On certain occasions we had to settle differences between farmers or groups of farmers.

There are, however, events of more common interest, which ought to be mentioned.

Foreign Oats Cause Dispute

In 1932 Sweden had a surplus of grain because there was no restriction on imports. Previously we had been able to dispose of part of our oats and barley by feeding hogs for export. However, England put a quota on imported bacon in order to protect her own farmers, thus cutting sharply our export market for bacon.

In the face of this surplus of oats, some private businessmen conceived the idea of buying oats from Germany, who also had a surplus. Because Germany granted extensive export subsidies on her oats, the Swedish businessmen could afford to undersell our domestic oats. Some farmers therefore thought it was wise to buy the cheaper German oats for feeding their hogs.

One day a merchant was unloading a shipload of oats in the harbor of Halmstad. This was reported to the county branch of the Farmers' Union and we thought it a good idea to demonstrate against the unnecessary import, against the merchant, and against our fellow farmers engaged in this business. We rang up some of our members and ordered them to take their ancient motor cars and meet at the harbor of Halmstad. Quite a few came. The merchant was standing on the vessel, we on the quay, and we told him what we thought about his business. I am afraid I told him some other things too.

The merchant's trucks drove like mad through the town to get rid of us, for each truck was accompanied by an old car with a crew of four sturdy

Farmers' Union men. The oats buyers were told what the Union thought about their using imported grains when the country was full of home grown which could not be sold. They argued with us, but we saw in their faces that they really felt ashamed.

This oats demonstration attracted enormous attention in the newspapers and elsewhere. Although we did not think we had done very much, we were called rude names, and it was said that methods like this were not for farmers.

Let us see what was actually happening. Farmers had already tried many times, by resolutions and deputations, to draw the government's attention to the bad state of farming, but without much success. In this instance we were speaking to our Socialist government in a language they ought to understand better. We were applying just a little of the methods used by the trade unions (from which the Labor Party has sprung). In due time a scheme was put into action, covering all agricultural production and combined with an import control. This made things not quite satisfactory, but at least bearable during the worst period of the agricultural crisis.

That affair had some aftereffects. I was brought into court for injury to the merchant's honor, and was fined 800 kronor. The sum was collected within a few days by the farmers of Halland. Of course I did not like the judge very much after that, but was surprised to see him saluting me in a friendly way when we met. To a friend of mine he observed that it was a pity the law should be like that, for, in fact, Gullander was right.

The Union Fights Imported Wood

A similar event occurred six months later in a neighboring county. A big wood pulp mill preferred to import their wood from Finland when the forests of the district, with men and horses, lay idle. A meeting was called to discuss the matter and people met in large numbers. The manager of the factory was also invited — and he came. I cannot help admiring that man. It was not an easy task to argue against all these farmers and peasants, for everyone spoke with vigor and there was quite a lot of demagogism, particularly when the union people and the leaders were talking. There was a perpetual “Hear, Hear!” and applause.

The manager, however, was met at first by an icy silence and then often interrupted by abuse. In reality, he was more worth the applause than anyone. He said: “Well, gentlemen, I am in the employ of the company, and have to take care of the interests of the shareholders. Also, the Finnish wood happens to be cheaper than the Swedish. It isn’t my business to consider the social side; I am, so to say, the servant of capitalism. But I quite understand your point of view and I wish it could be arranged somehow, so that cutting and hauling could start again in our forests.”

In due time even this affair was settled through a government scheme.

LAND PROBLEMS

Among the worst things we had were troubles between farmers of different sized farms. On some

of the big farms there were a number of small tenants who had to pay their rent with work. The quantity of labor for such a tenancy was fixed by very old rules. During the course of time the price of the land in general rose, but the cost of labor was rising much more. The tenants from such an estate came up to our office and asked if we were willing to support them in their demand for a new agreement. We, on our part, went up to the squire and proposed negotiations. He was one of the very few relics from feudal times, and told us he was going to negotiate with his tenants himself and did not need any help. "Well," we said, "you can try, but we shall probably see you again."

The "negotiations" took place in this way. The tenants were ordered up to the estate office. The squire entered, and standing upright they had to listen to a memorandum in ten paragraphs, stating that everything on the estate was all right and everybody content. There was no actual answer but some murmur, which the squire took for "Yes," and so he left the office.

Of course, the tenants ought to have answered in a distinct and clear way that they did not accept his proposals, but such was the spirit on that estate that nobody dared to say anything against the squire.

To make a long story short, the county branch during long and hard negotiations pressed that gentleman, step by step, from his position. We were supported on certain occasions by the county council and the government. The ultimate result was a col-

lective agreement, stating that all tenancies should be paid in cash, and at a price corresponding to the market. The labor was to be paid according to the agreement between agricultural employers and workers.

We had several affairs of the same kind, but it must be admitted that the estate owners generally were very broadminded and practically no troubles arose.

I also must admit that the squire mentioned above has changed during recent times, and I think he now regards social problems quite differently.

Peasants' Rebellion

In this connection it may be worth while mentioning an episode from the history of my own farm. Bårarp is a rather large farm for Sweden, but previously it was larger, almost an estate with a number of small tenants. All that has changed; the tenants have bought their holdings and become owner-farmers. I started as a tenant farmer and bought my place in 1939.

In 1780 there was "a rebellion among the peasants" of the Bårarp estate. In more modern wording it would have been "a strike of the tenants." They thought they had too much work to do, and probably they were quite right. Consequently they stayed at home and refused to do any work at all. The rebellion was suppressed with all the severity of that time, and as a punishment the peasants had to erect four granite wing buildings during their free hours (which were not many). Two of those buildings still

remain as a monument to the methods of solving social problems in those days.

I have told this little story rather frequently to visitors belonging to different political parties, and I always add: "Nobody wants that time back, neither the owner, nor the tenants."

Timber Haulers Strike

In the north many of the smaller farmers' means of livelihood did not come within the scope of agriculture — for instance, those who supplemented their income by timber hauling in winter. These farmers were not receiving a fair deal from the timber companies. The Farmers' Union tried to obtain collective agreements like those which the men occupied in cutting the trees and organized in trade unions had had for a long time. The companies, however, refused to negotiate, saying it was impossible to have collective agreements for the haulers. It came to an open fight. At first the companies cared little, thinking that these small people could not keep on very long with their strike. The companies, however, soon realized that those smallholders in the north were supported by the Farmers' Union. Subscriptions were started all over the country among the union members, although the great majority of them had not the slightest personal interest in timber hauling. Money, grain and feed streamed up to the north by post and rail in order to help our fighting fellow farmers. This was something new in the history of Swedish farming, as north and south had previously always "played off" one against the other.

Further public opinion was against the companies. They at last began to understand that they had come up against something new, and negotiations were started. Both parties made a collective agreement and fixed the prices for timber hauling in a reasonable way.

BUILDING COSTS

In this chapter I have given a few examples from the activities of the Farmers' Union to show how the union was working. On the occasions mentioned, the union was successful, at least to a certain degree. It was not always like that — for instance in our efforts to keep the building costs of the countryside at a reasonable level.

In our country, with its hard climate, it is necessary to have better heat-insulated buildings than in most parts of Europe. We simply have to keep the cattle indoors for seven or eight months of the year. It is therefore quite natural that building costs should be higher than in the more southern countries.

The workers of the building industry, who were organized in very strong trade unions, got collective agreements with their employers and a price-list, fixing the price of every detail in a house. This list was worked out in accordance with conditions in towns. They claimed that the list should be applied also to our farm buildings with their large areas and simpler finish. This resulted in building costs higher than the total value of the farm.

There was a long, hard struggle between the trade unions and our union. We tried different methods,

and for some time they appeared successful. In the long run, however, we had to give up the struggle. I am sorry to say that question is not settled yet, and building costs are still unreasonably high. It may be solved in another way, by prefabrication at the factories with assembly on the building site. However, it seems the building workers have more than a fair deal, for many people want to leave their present jobs and go into that industry.

The Co-operative Spirit

It was important to take care of the farmers' interests in the ways mentioned, but still more important was getting a new spirit, a spirit of co-operation and working together. Farmers' co-operatives had started in Sweden before, about the beginning of the century, but many of them did not survive due to the lack of co-operative spirit at the time. Information and education were required, and as can be seen from what has been said, we adopted the methods previously used by the laborers' trade unions. Many disliked that, but there was no other way. We frequently had to fight against our fellow farmers who did not join our united efforts and even worked against us. The spirit came at last, and the actual success of our co-operatives is largely due to that spirit.

Educating Our Farmers *The Co-operative Way*

IT CANNOT BE POINTED OUT too frequently that information and education are essential in a broad reform movement like that which took place among our farmers.

We started with lectures at the meetings of the local branches. We soon discovered that the lectures had to be interesting enough to hold the attention of the ordinary man. It was not an easy task to get lecturers for all these branches. At the beginning we had to rely on volunteers. These were mostly farmers with better-than-average knowledge about economic and social things, and last but not least, with real enthusiasm for the movement—for the union as well as the co-operatives. In due time, we got a paid staff both at the county branch and at headquarters, and they did a good deal of the work. I consider the first category the best, for the farmers believe more in their own fellow farmers who know exactly what the farming trade really is like.

An important factor was that farmers were able to get together at meetings to discuss their own

questions, local as well as national, and to raise claims and pass them on to the national union.

CO-OPERATIVE FILMS

Too much listening to lectures, however, was not so good. People sometimes get tired of such talks. There is a saying in this country (and most likely in others too) that a man remembers much better what he has seen than what he has heard. Consequently, we tried to get some illustrations for our talks.

We made expressive drawings on big paper wall sheets, but it was difficult to carry these big sheets everywhere, and it was not long before we turned to lantern slides. These enabled us to show a quantity of pictures, drawings and photographs, and to make whole series of stories. There was, of course, always a tendency to show the value of co-operation or anything similar.

At that time I had an artist friend who specialized in making these drawings. Particularly at the family parties of the local branches this kind of entertainment was much appreciated. A good way to make people comfortable was to have a cup of coffee and some scones or sandwiches in connection with the meeting.

The next step was films. These were produced to show the work in our co-operatives, practical ways of doing the household work, and films with a plot in them. All of them were very much appreciated.

In the county agricultural society of Halland we

had made some films, one of them dealing with the work in the Halmstad Co-operative Packing Plant. The big Co-operative Milk Center in Stockholm had also produced a film on their activities.

In 1938 there was an inquiry from the British National Farmers' Union about these films. Previously I had felt that no one could beat Swedish institutions in using long and complicated names. But hearing the name "National Farmers' Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited, Stratford-on-Avon," I realized the English were ahead of us! The "Farmers' Mutual" was showing films as an entertainment during their local meetings. Now they wanted to have a film about Swedish agriculture. Their intention was to borrow the films in question, make copies of them, and use parts of these copies for editing a "Swedish Film" in Stratford-on-Avon with a commentary in English.

I Become a Producer

I did not like the idea that someone in Stratford, who had most likely never seen our country, should tell the British people everything about Swedish farming. Consequently I wrote to the Farmers' Mutual and told them my point of view, suggesting that we should make the film in Sweden and send it over to England for revision so that it would suit the British public.

I got an answer from Mr. Sydney B. Carter, whom I liked from the first moment. He quite agreed to my suggestion, and so I started. I went up to my

friend Axel L. Ericson, the horticultural adviser, and explained everything to him.

"All right," said Axel, "we will do it. Our county Halland is a miniature Sweden; you find all types of landscape within the county borderlines. We can take all the pictures here. That will save a lot of time, and a lot of money too — for I suppose you don't have an unlimited amount of capital at your disposal."

In fact, I hadn't very much. He became the manager and photographer, I the producer. We could not afford to give ourselves any big salaries, but the honor of our country was at stake, and we simply had to make a good film.

We went around and photographed farming in the plains and in the poorer regions, different breeds of domestic animals, crops and machines, co-operatives and meetings, farm buildings and houses, the interior of kitchens, the youths competitions, etc.

We copied films from other parts of Sweden, work in the forests, beautiful scenery, immense flocks of reindeer in Lapland and so on. We went down to the seashore to get some shots of the farmers' leisure hours — but the real reason was that we wanted to have some nice girls in order to brighten up the picture!

One film with a modernized farmer's kitchen was spoiled, and there was no time for another shot. What to do? Axel went up to his new flat in Halmstad, which had more up-to-date equipment than the best rural homes. In the film, however, it became a

rural kitchen — and all the improvements were due to the efforts of the Farmers' Union and the co-operatives!

We needed some pictures about sports. One man who had a film on moose shooting had promised to lend it to us — but he changed his mind, probably thinking us a little suspicious. We had to have something. It was not hunting time now, but what about fishing?

On his way to the office, Axel met the mayor, who was known to be very keen on angling. Axel seized the opportunity, stopped his car and pressed the mayor inside. Away they went to collect the tools and out in the country to a stream, where Axel made some grand shots of a farmer fishing salmon during his leisure hours. The best of all was that the mayor really happened to catch a trout — though only a very small one.

We had made some diagrams too, showing development of farm produce prices. The agricultural crisis was symbolized by a devil pulling a string — downwards, of course — but at the bottom of the curve the united farmers interfered and pulled the string up again. To move the symbols just a little between each exposure took a great deal of time, and it was very late before we finished — but we felt ourselves to be the equals of Walt Disney and thought the episode worth mentioning in the newspapers! We rang up the newspaper *Hallandsposten*, and the following day there was a headline straight across the front page:

"Farmers' Union slaughters the devil!"

I went over to England to deliver the film at Stratford. Syd and I became friends at once. He took me around both in Shakespeare's town and in the rural districts. We discussed films, and I got some copies of his from Great Britain and Australia. He made some cuts on our Swedish film, and altered our draft commentary quite a lot to suit English audiences.

The film was shown to many audiences among the British Farmers' Union's local branches, and thanks to Syd Carter's initiative I think that at least some people have an idea of what Swedish farmers' co-operation means.

Other copies were shown in France, Holland and Switzerland, but the war put a stop to further activities in that direction.

Again I have probably used too much space, too many pages, for a detail, but is there not something in this idea worth consideration, and on a much larger scale? Even among Swedish farmers, probably the most "peninsular" in the world, there is now an increasing interest in international contacts. How would it be if farmers' organizations in the different countries started to produce representative (and, of course, entertaining) films on their own agriculture, adapted for showing abroad?

That might well be one of the first steps toward getting the farming groups to know more about each other and to establish contacts over the frontiers,

thus serving as a background for future co-operation on essential things.

We need, however, quite a lot of methods for solving that rather hard task of farmers' international co-operation.

Publishing

The press plays an important part in any educational program. We have a number of farmers' papers, and within the federation there is a publicity branch, dealing with these things. A lot of books are published for schools and the general public. There is also literature on actual problems within farming — technical, scientific, co-operative, political, and economic. A number of novels about country life have been published, and some have been quite successful.

We have national papers, one belonging to the union and one to the Federation of Farmers' Co-operatives, both distributed all over the country. Nearly as valuable as these are the local daily newspapers with which we always worked in a friendly spirit.

WORKING WITH YOUTH

However, we soon realized that there was still one thing of utmost importance. Another generation was coming after us, new members, indeed, coming each year. We had to establish contact with farmers' sons and daughters who were going to succeed their parents. There were farmers' schools all over the

country (there ought to be still more of that kind), and we were very anxious that farming co-operation should come within the scope of teaching. Some of the headmasters and teachers were quite interested in our activities, in fact they had been among the pioneers of our movement. With them it was rather easy to insure co-operative instruction during the lessons. Many teachers at first did not care much for the union and co-operatives. These teachers were informed by special courses, and in due time it was possible to get our information taught in the regular educational program.

In order to stimulate interest, we gave prizes for the best articles written by the pupils on Farming Co-operation.

It was not enough, however, to contact the schools. There are two youth organizations in this country, J.U.F., corresponding roughly to the 4-H clubs in the United States; and the S.L.U., Youth branch of the Farmer's Party. Both operate much toward the same purpose — club work, etc. The union established connections with both of them, and we gave them the opportunity of electing one member in county and local branches.

We supported them in many ways, granting them some money for their work, having common parties, common lectures, etc. In return, they entertained at our meetings with songs, music and folk dances.

WE START A SCHOOL

In spite of what has just been mentioned, it was evident that we had not yet done enough. The

pioneers, so to speak, had grown with the movement. In one way or another they had educated themselves for the co-operative work. What about the successors? Would they have the same enthusiasm? These questions concerned both the executives and the employees, particularly the managers.

We took a glance at some other broad movements in our country, especially consumers' co-operatives (KF) and trade unions, and found that these bodies had quite a number of schools. They elected the best of their young people and sent them to their special schools for courses of different lengths. There, these young people acquired knowledge on such subjects as national economy, social questions, etc., and also

FIG. 5. Study circle at the Sânga-Säby School.



how this knowledge could be applied in their own branch. There was "Vår Gård" ("Our Court") at Saltsjöbaden, Brunnsvik, Jakobsberg, and some other schools.

In the union and federation we realized that we had to go the same way. It took a long time, however, before we got our own "Idea School," as we like to call it in Sweden. In May, 1944, the opening of the Sångs-Säby School was celebrated. Sångs-Säby is a farm on an island beautifully situated near the shore of Lake Mälaren, roughly twenty-five miles from Stockholm. This holding was wanted in order to get "farming atmosphere," not so much for the agriculturists, but more for other people employed in our co-operatives and in other branches who would come to courses and conferences at Sångs-Säby.

Quarters for the school were arranged in the former Manor House. Dormitories, lounges, and a kitchen were erected. As a headmaster we got Theo Ågren, previously at a farmers' school in the county of Småland. He had the co-operative spirit to a high degree, and had done a lot of work for our movement.

School Activities

At Sångs young farmers learn the business of agricultural co-operation and organization, including the economical and social background. Wide latitude is given in discussions, personal activities, and initiative.

There are special courses for people employed in the farmers' enterprises, supplemented by visits to,

and some work in, our co-operative unions. The value of these conferences and meetings held at Sānga, cannot be overestimated. Our people come there in order to discuss their problems. Representatives from other branches of the community visit Sānga. These include journalists, students from universities and colleges, consumers' co-operatives folk, housewives, trades-union people, etc. On their arrival they generally do not know much about farming, on many occasions only "that farmers are always grumbling." They are, however, intelligent and selected people and acquire a lot of knowledge about the problems and difficulties of farming. They discuss matters with ardor on these occasions — but that is a good thing in a democratic community. When it is over, there is nearly always a much better understanding between the farming group and the townspeople.

Mr. Ågren, the headmaster, believes that the school should offer courses for people not engaged in farming, such as engineers, teachers, etc. All these desire to come, because of the school's pleasant surroundings and proximity to the capital. On these occasions Mr. Ågren always has a chance to tell them a little about the school and its aims, and about the state of agriculture in general.

Thus the Sānga School is becoming just what we wanted it to be — an ideal and an idea center of our movement. People come there, and afterwards tell a lot of others about farming and farming problems.

I imagine that in some other countries the understanding between farmers and other people is better

than in our country. Look, for example, at the number of books about farming published in America and England which are read by the townspeople.

It is important in a democratic community to have people of different classes understand each other, especially the townspeople and country folk. Negotiations are better than blind fighting; and without knowledge about the conditions of the other party, negotiations become unnecessarily hard and long.

Dairy Co-operatives and Bacon Factories

IN SWEDEN, milk is by far the most important farm product. Some milk is used for direct consumption, but most of it is processed into cheese and butter. During prewar times we used to export large quantities of butter to England and other countries. The Rune Brand was the sign of quality produce in Sweden, just as the Lure Brand was in Denmark.

Dairy co-operatives were among the first to be introduced in this country, chiefly for the export trade, as already mentioned. The consumption of margarine was rising each year. A rather popular slogan among the farming population was: "Let us sell the expensive butter to the British, and eat the cheap margarine ourselves."

There are some dairy co-operatives in other parts of the country, too, occupied with butter- and cheese-making for the home market and retailing fresh milk to the towns. Biggest of these was the Stockholm Milk Center.

All these co-operatives were working rather well

on an independent basis. There was, however, some working together on the technical side. The Ministry of Agriculture had prepared a scheme for testing butter, and the dairy managers competed with each other at regular intervals in relation to quality. A special association for the export trade was also established.

On the home market, however, the competition was quite strong between co-operatives, private enterprise and farmer retailers.

The Agricultural Crisis

All this worked fairly well until the crisis of 1930. The world market was overstocked with everything, and there was a terrible surplus of butter in Sweden. All surplus was sent to the British market and prices kept on dropping. At the worst stage, butter-exporting dairies paid the farmers four to five cents per gallon for milk. It appeared then that export prices dropped faster than the home market, and that the retail business was better than, or perhaps not as bad as, the processing.

No one was demanding prices that would ruin the farmers, but everyone wanted to retail the milk — co-operatives, private companies and single farmers — and prices dropped.

In the federation and the union, people began to consider the matter. Everyone realized that this could not continue much longer, or the whole farming industry would collapse. Professor Nanneson, an economist, worked out the following scheme:

1. Co-operative dairies to be established all over the country.
2. All farmers to join the co-operatives.
3. The co-operatives to join into district unions.
4. District unions to join into a National Union of Co-operative Dairies.
5. On the home market we are going to take a fair and reasonable price corresponding to the costs of production. This particularly concerns retail milk, which, owing to the special costs, ought to be priced higher than milk processed into butter or cheese. This means that competition between co-operatives is eliminated.
6. The surplus to be exported at prices obtainable abroad.
7. With home market, particularly for retail milk, giving a better price than export, there must be a clearing on a reasonable scale between all the co-operatives. The clearing to be arranged by the National Union of Co-operative Dairies.
8. Propaganda for using more butter (instead of margarine) in the farmers' households, in order to get rid of part of the surplus.

In the last item mentioned, there was also an element of self-confidence. We were convinced that we ought to use our own first-class product instead of a substitute, like margarine.

Of course, there were a lot of comments, exceptions and additions to the rules, but those just listed were the essential points.

The Bucket Carters

Most of the intelligent farmers were in favor of this scheme and it was put into action. However, it was a task to get it organized in a rational way. Many of our fellow-farmers were pure individualists. They did not see that the whole system had to be

changed if the dairy production was to survive. They merely looked after their private business.

Retail farmers were the worst, a considerable number at first refusing to join the co-operatives. In the Farmers' Union we introduced the term "Bucket Carters" as a nickname for these people. Perhaps that does not sound so bad in print, but the recipients hated it, and Bucket Carters within our ranks very soon became synonymous with 'Blackleg' within the trade unions.

The Farmers' Union had to do much of the rough work. We had to inform everyone about the aims of the new co-operative union, and in particular treat the Bucket Carters according to their deserts.

On one occasion there were some Bucket Carters in the Halmstad district. We wanted to inform them about their duties toward their fellow-farmers, so we hired a bus, got a crew of Farmers' Union people, and went around to them. I particularly recall one, who lost control of himself, got dark red in the face, hastened inside and came out again with a pistol in one hand and a rifle in the other. He told us he was going to riddle everyone approaching him. However, we were not much afraid, and did nothing but tell him a little about the milk market.

It is true none of these Bucket Carters joined the co-operative at once, but it was quite evident they did not feel comfortable at such a visit by farmer-colleagues, and before very long all of them were members of the co-operative.

In this way, people belonging to the Farmers' Union branches and to the Farmers' Co-operative

Movement, did an effective job all over the country. New dairy co-operatives were started and attached to the National Union, and the total membership of that organization rose rapidly.

In districts comparatively far from the towns it was easy to organize the farmers in dairy co-operatives. It appeared that the retail market in many respects was the bottleneck. Had it been only a question of processing the milk, very few differences would have existed.

Organizing the Market

The organization urged that to influence the whole milk market it was necessary to control all the milk, both that used for processing and that for retailing. To make farming pay it was essential to raise the whole price level of milk and dairy produce.

Butter could be imported at a price lower than the inland production costs, and this formed a barrier to raising the prices. It was quite another thing with the retail milk. Since there was no importing problem, it should have been possible to make some profit in this line. But if the retailers kept their market without any interference, the gap between retail milk and milk for processing would become too big. Farmers delivering their milk to the butter-making dairies would be given no help, and would probably go back into the retail trade. This would again bring down the whole price level.

The plan was that a clearing should be arranged between the retailers and those who delivered to the processing dairies, in order to give a fair price to

everyone. Many of the retailers realized that this was necessary for the sake of the whole, but some of them did not want to relinquish the advantages they had gained. They argued that they did not see any reason why they should take part in the clearing, and they thought that the profit of retailing belonged entirely to them.

As mentioned, we got the majority of the farmers as members of the dairy co-operatives, but unfortunately we did not get quite enough at that stage to make the clearing system effective.

Government Support

We had to ask the government for support to put this scheme into action. Well, we got it, the government realizing quite clearly that the market had to be reorganized and rationalized. The clearing was arranged on a combined co-operative and governmental basis, the National Union of Co-operative Dairies having to collect the fees from all retailers, and distribute the money in a rather complicated way to the processing dairies.

This way may seem to have been all right, but no doubt it would have been better if we farmers had been able to arrange the whole dairy clearing by ourselves.

In the way it was arranged, the National Union of Co-operative Dairies became to some extent dependent on the government. This later proved at times to be a drawback, and on such occasions it was useful to have the Farmers' Union quite independent of all governmental bodies.

Modernizing the Dairies

The National Union of Co-operative Dairies and its branches did splendid work. Dairies and creameries were built or reconstructed and equipped with the most up-to-date machinery.

When the trucks appeared, it was more profitable to collect milk from large areas and process it in big factories, where labor could be saved and all equipment kept thoroughly up-to-date.



FIG. 6. Second floor of the Halmstad Co-operative Dairy.

In our district union this was, and still is, quite a problem. Often it necessitates the closing down of a dairy co-operative to concentrate on bigger units. Often there is a lot of opposition to such a step from the farmers of that district. This is quite understandable, and on the whole that strong feeling of local patriotism is a very good thing. To many farmers, particularly the older ones who have started and built up the local dairy, the closing down is almost a sacrilege.

In the long run, however, we cannot continue with the upkeep of establishments that are not up-to-date, and this local patriotism must be overcome. In most instances this has been done, but it has frequently been a hard task.

The Dairy Co-operative Organization has developed excellently during the last decade, and now I believe that ninety-seven per cent of the farmers are members. They have taken science and research into their service in solving their problems, such as how to use the by-product skimmed milk.

In the southern part of the country hog raising is an important industry, and all the skimmed milk is used for feeding. In other sections they do not keep many hogs, and in the summer there is a surplus of skimmed milk. Some district unions in the midlands therefore have started processing the skimmed milk into milk powder. This is an excellent raw material for the bakers and the chocolate industry, and there is the possibility of storing skimmed milk to be used as winter feed.

It is very important for the co-operatives to keep informed on scientific developments; to employ a staff of technicians able to do the research work; to have laboratories, etc. If this is not done, there is the risk of other industries engaging all the people worth having and step by step pressing farmers' co-operatives from their position and influence.

At the present stage, with nearly 100 per cent membership, a first-class organization and first-class equipment, the Dairy Co-operative Union would probably be able to do what they failed to do in the early 'thirties — insure the clearing between different groups of farmers without support from the government. We still have government price control, so the question has not become urgent yet.

I hope that no one will gather from the reasoning above that I am opposed to the government or its actions. However, I have seen other groups, particularly the industrial laborers and their trade unions, build up their organizations without any support from the state authorities.

The margin between the producer's and the consumer's price for milk is very small. For milk with a 3.7 per cent butterfat content, the farmer receives about 6 cents per quart. Consumers in the rural districts pay 6.5 cents per quart for this milk; and in the large towns they pay 7.5 cents per quart for milk standardized to 3 per cent butterfat (1951). I doubt if the margin between producer's and consumer's price is as low as this in any other country (with the possible exception of Switzerland). This indi-

cates, of course, the high degree of efficiency with which our distribution system operates.

Cheese used to be made in many small, primitive plants. The quality varied from plant to plant, and the market was disorganized. The dairy union undertook to centralize and standardize the manufacture of cheese by forming a special branch called "Riksost" (National Cheese). Riksost plans and supervises production; it has standardized quality and organized the market. Special plants have been set up in several parts of the country to store surplus cheese. In addition to the common household cheeses, special delicacy cheeses such as Swedish Blue, Creme de Chantilly, etc. are produced.

HALMISTAD CO-OPERATIVE BACON FACTORY

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Members</i>	<i>No. of Hogs</i>	<i>Av. Price/lb. Dead Weight in Kr.</i>	<i>Hogs deliv- ered. Paid in Kr.</i>
1900	1,111	7,840	0.33	359,951
1910	2,639	15,959	0.45	1,020,955
1920	5,875	14,206	1.34	3,114,542
1930	4,493	53,079	0.55	4,109,104
1931	4,987	61,681	0.35	3,005,669
1940	9,859	92,384	0.71	10,457,560
1945	10,369	65,293	1.02	12,554,099
1946	10,397	71,066	1.08	14,543,181

THE HALMSTAD CO-OPERATIVE PACKING PLANT

Until the early 1930's, the co-operative bacon factories took interest only in the export market. The inland market was left to private butchers.

In the marketing of hogs we did not have much to grumble about. Our co-operatives treated us fairly, paying according to dead weight and quality.



FIG. 7. Mobile butchers' shops.

With cattle, however, the situation was different. Private butchers bought them "per piece," and there was no weighing or grading. The butcher had the advantage of knowing the market and the quality of the meat he bought while the farmer did not.

Local and county branches of the Farmers' Union took up the matter. The British auction markets for slaughter cattle were much better than ours at the time, but the co-operative way of tackling the problem seemed to us the most natural.

This problem came up during an annual meeting of the Co-operative Bacon Factory. The existing methods of marketing slaughter cattle were characterized as prehistoric by some of the farmer members. However, there were opponents in the house, particularly some of the executives of the co-operative. They argued very hard against this new business.

"We have now," they said, "this well-managed co-operative bacon factory of ours, with a very good reputation. Bacon hogs, however, are a highly standardized product. It is much more difficult to deal with cattle and other beasts, with all their different grades and qualities."

In particular, a prominent Danish-born farmer told us that the experience of his native country showed that killing and marketing cattle was no business of the co-operatives.

We solved the problem by starting a new co-operative for killing and marketing cattle, sheep and horses. We worked together with the bacon factory, with accommodations in the same building. We started this new co-operative in order not to risk

the reputation of our original organization, should the new one not be successful.

Hiring a Manager

I had the job of engaging a competent manager for the cattle business. I knew a private dealer known for his honesty, knowledge and judgment, with whom I had transacted most of my cattle business.

I went to him and asked, "Well, Oscar, what do you think about our new co-op?"

"Rather a risky business," he answered.

"Quite frankly, Oscar, is the present way of marketing the beasts the right one? Do we all get our proper share?"

"Well," he answered, "we have been friends for many years, you and I. I suppose you understand that we private butchers and dealers make a profit wherever we can. I may try to be as honest as possible, but should there appear a chance of buying a beast below the real value, well . . . and particularly at the small farms, where they don't know much about the market, we butchers often make a bargain."

"Thank you for answering so frankly. I am here to ask if you would be interested in becoming the manager of our co-op?" He didn't reply at once, was thoughtful for a few minutes, and then said, "Well, I will consider the matter." Then we parted.

A few days afterward we met again and Mr. Bengtsson told me he would not mind accepting the offer. "And what about salary?" I asked.

"As you know, I am doing rather good business

now," he said. "My income is roughly 15,000 kronor a year. I would like to have about the same, and besides a 'risk premium' say of 2,000 kronor."

I thought it reasonable, suggested it to the Executive, and they accepted. We worked out a scale, with a minimum salary and premiums based on turnover.

This was the way we had to go in those years when engaging managers for our newly-established co-operatives. We had to take them from the ranks of the private dealers. In this case we got an excellent fellow, and he and I worked splendidly together.

Sometimes the farmers were not so successful in their choice. Too many managers were still dealers at heart and thought more of profits than of co-operation. Now it is much easier, the farmers' co-operative movement having educated a lot of people to be competent managers.

Organizing the Farmers

The Farmers' Union had to do the organizing work, and the pioneers of the local branches had to go from house to house urging the farmers to become members of the packing house co-operative. Each year more farmers joined, and the membership is now more than ninety per cent of all the farmers in the district.

Some farmers were rather hard to persuade. They apparently thought, "How can I give the animal away before I have the money in my hand?" On the whole, however, we were rather successful, thanks to the good work done by the Farmers' Union people.

Membership in both the old and the new co-operative was voluntary, but it was compulsory for members to deliver all beasts for killing. This was new, and many farmers did not like it at first, but it was done to secure a steady market for the co-operative. Otherwise, they would have delivered when the market was full instead of when there was a shortage and prices were rising. Through education, the Farmers' Union got the people to understand the necessity for keeping up a steady supply. Soon the farmers realized that they had not only rights but also duties.

All beasts were collected in trucks at the separate holdings, then killed, weighed and graded, and the members got their pay accordingly. We sold to the retail shops (private and consumers' co-operatives) in our own district, the surplus being sent to Gothenburg, the nearest of the big towns.

Opposition From Private Dealers

Of course, the private butchers did not like our co-operative business, for they saw their turnover dropping every year. They called us uncomplimentary names and tried to organize opposition against us, but without success.

There were two farmers sitting in a bus, discussing the happenings of the day. "This co-operative packing house is a good thing," one said. "I always get a fair price and I am quite content."

A private butcher was sitting two or three seats from them and heard their talk. "But nobody got so

much yet from that damned co-op so he fainted away," he grumbled. The whole bus company burst into laughter, for they knew that previously this butcher had always paid particularly bad prices to the farmers of his district.

When I look back to these early 'thirties, I can see that though we took over practically the whole business, not one of the private dealers was ruined. Some of them came over to us as managers or employees. Some made a living from their retail shops and bought all their goods from the co-operative. Others became farmers, and a few were at the age of retiring. This was a good thing, for our aim was not to ruin people but to establish a "less barbaric" market.

Hitherto I have been dealing only with our local co-operatives at Halmstad. The packing plant started in 1931 and the bacon factory in 1899, both covering the southern part of the county of Halland and certain parts of the neighboring counties. Now there is another side that I should like to mention.

Rise of the National Union

Professor Ludvig Nannesson, a prominent Swedish economist, suggested that the farmers should organize co-operative packing plants which in turn would be united into a national union. This plan was first drawn up in Lantbruksförbundet, and the organization soon spread throughout Sweden due to the efforts of the Farmers' Union people. In 1951, 78 per cent of meat and pork was marketed through the co-operatives.

By 1933 the organization had grown large enough so that the National Union of Farmers' Co-operative Packing Plants could be established. Each co-operative sold and distributed in its own district. In Stockholm, Gothenburg and parts of Norrland (the northern part of Sweden, where agricultural production is rather low), the market belonged to the union, and all co-operatives had to place their surplus at the union's disposal.

When this scheme was put into operation, the first difference arose in the Halmstad Co-operative between our manager and the Executive Committee. Bengtsson knew the Gothenburg market very well, and did not think that the newly established union was nearly as competent as himself for that job. He was following his instincts as a former private dealer. The Executive, however, resolved that we should follow the union. Bengtsson was loyal and there was no further discussion.

We all liked Bengtsson very much; his interests were in our common enterprise, and I think it even occupied his dreams by night. Some years afterwards he went to the hospital for a small operation. We never saw our friend again but followed him with deep mourning to the cemetery of Harplinge.

After that Artur Börjesson, manager of the bacon factory, took care of the cattle business as well. He was one of the pioneers of farming co-operation in our country, and in his charge both of the co-operatives worked still closer together, becoming indeed one enterprise.

Operation of the Halmstad Plant

Much could be said about the development of the Halmstad Co-operative Packing Plant, but I will discuss only a few of the details. One year we took up the marketing of live cattle and horses by arranging Auction Markets once a month. Another year we built a big refrigerator building for storing meat and pork when the market was overstocked. Then came the sausage factory for further processing of

THE DAIRY ORGANIZATION

	1890	1910	1920	1930	1939	1946
No. of dairy co-ops	73	550	565	715	759	712*
Farmer members			65,300	101,300	187,400	260,701
Milk delivered in million gallons			3,800	8,300	14,500	19,000

* The decline in co-op numbers from 1939 to 1946 was due to centralization of the organization into fewer, larger units.

our products. In a few years this factory proved to be too small and we had to rebuild it double the size. On the top of that factory we arranged an assembly hall for laborers and other people employed in the co-operative. It is also very useful when parties of farmers and their wives come to visit and inspect. On these occasions they are usually invited to have a cup of coffee and some sandwiches in the hall and Börjesson gives a survey of the work and organization of the whole enterprise.

We did not have many retail shops of our own,

but we preferred to have the retail people as our customers. Consequently we started running "rolling shops" or vans for distributing fresh meat and sausages to the farmer-members and other people living in the countryside.

In 1946 the Halmstad Co-operative bought a hotel. We had frequently considered building a "Farmers' House" in the center of town, where we could have

HALMSTAD CO-OPERATIVE PACKING PLANT

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Members</i>	<i>No. of Animals</i>	<i>Paid for Other Stock</i>
1932	1,422	5,582	\$ 65,025*
1935	5,243	25,623	383,020
1940	8,520	43,582	1,128,379
1945	9,347	39,420	1,120,662
1946	9,460	43,463	1,395,988

* Based upon 1950 equivalent \$1 equals 5.18 Kronor.

our meetings. But until the hotel was put up for sale, our chances of finding a meeting place appeared slim because of the shortage of suitable building plots and the red tape of building regulations.

This was the first time that a farmers' co-operative took over a hotel in Sweden, although the practice was common in Denmark and Finland. Buying the hotel gave us a psychological lift. Townspeople were prone to feel superior to country people, but now that we farmers could look upon one of the biggest houses in town as our property, we felt inferior to no one.

Different Phases of Farmers' Co-operation

BUYING AND SELLING co-operatives are nearly as old as the first dairy co-operatives, which were started at the beginning of the century. From the first they were firmly united in a national union. The chief aim of the buying and selling co-operatives was to provide necessities for the farmers such as fertilizers and feeds.

BUYING AND SELLING CO-OPERATIVES

They were organized either as local co-operatives joined together in county co-operatives, or as county co-operatives with branches out in the district. Members were not forced to sell or buy within the co-operatives as they were in the co-operatives mentioned previously. This has since changed as the sale of grains became one of their more important aims.

Buying and selling co-operatives and their national union have had a most varied history. Before and during the first world war their influence and membership was growing rapidly. They bought machine factories, became shipowners, and had an interest

in a bank. They did one very sound thing for a co-operative dealing with grains — they bought a large flour mill at Malmö, in South Sweden.

Two or three years after the first war the crisis came. All prices fell, and the gold standard was restored. It was evident that both the union and the co-operatives had gone too far. Bank balances were low, and they had to clear out all of the new and big enterprises. A number of the county co-operatives were near bankruptcy, and both co-operatives and individual farmers lost a lot of money. However, many farmers were not loyal to their co-operatives, and a large number of members dropped out.

Reorganization

The whole movement had to be reconstructed and started again on a sounder economic basis. During these years of the 'twenties there was no talk about expanding, only of keeping what was possible.

Times changed once more, and what was better, the attitude of the farmers changed. Through the Farmers' Union and the youth organizations they achieved a spirit of co-operation as never before. This was a better foundation than anything else for the co-operative movement to build upon.

During the 'thirties, selling and buying co-operatives began to develop again rather rapidly, and so did their union. They took up the selling of grains in a serious way. First, separate co-operatives were started just for that, but they soon began working together. New rules were introduced including com-

pulsory selling and buying, so the co-operatives would be able to estimate the quantities they would be handling.

Additional lines such as seeds were taken on. The use of machinery and implements, from the simplest tool to the tractor and combine, has been another subject for co-operation. There are a lot of new materials for farm use, such as mercury for dressing the seed corn, and AIV-acid for conserving green clover when making ensilage.

Milling

Nevertheless, there is something missing within the buying and selling organization. We do not have any control of the milling industry. Once we had a large mill, but could not keep it during the crisis. In the south and the midlands, wheat and rye growing is an important part of the farming industry. However, we lose all control of the wheat when it leaves our grain elevators. Milling is processing as much as buttermaking and sausage making. There is a lot of research work going on within the milling industry. For a time between the wars, the big milling companies sometimes refused to use Swedish wheat, asserting that the quality was not as good as the overseas varieties. This may have been true to some extent, but the whole period during the war has shown that an excellent flour can be produced from Swedish-grown wheat.

The reasoning above is only to point out that we farmers must have some association with the manufacturing. No doubt the best way would be by having

a big flour mill of our own, though I do not say we should own all the mills.

One county co-operative in the midlands has bought an average-sized mill — but this is not enough. The national union ought to have a large one, with the most up-to-date plant and machinery — and, last but not least, a well-equipped laboratory.

THE BUYING AND SELLING ORGANIZATION

	1905	1920	1930	1940	1946
No. of district co-ops	7	19	17	23	23
Farmer members			29,123	54,200	119,750*
Output in millions of dollars		26	10	45	99

* Not all farmers dealing with the Buying and Selling co-operatives are members.

Buying and selling co-operatives do not yet have as many members as the dairy and packing house co-operatives, but the number is constantly growing. It is estimated that at least sixty per cent of the essential products are passing through the co-operatives and their national union.

Combines are becoming rather common in Sweden, particularly in the agricultural districts in the South and Midlands. These machines have brought about a great saving in hand labor. The use of combines in a country as wet as Sweden does bring up a problem — the need for drying plants. Many of the buying and selling co-operatives in the plains now have equipment of that kind. However, future plans call for an organized network of drying plants to handle the production of grains.

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OUTPUT OF THE BUYING AND SELLING ORGANIZATION, 1946

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Fertilizers	18.6	Other grains	12.2
Feeds	19.2	Seeds	8.6
Potatoes	1.9	Machinery	5.5
Wheat and rye	26.0	Miscellaneous	8.0

FORESTRY

Forestry is an important industry in Sweden. Many of the poorer farms could not exist without a source of timber. Forestry furnishes a source of employment for men and horses during the winter when no work can be done on the farm land, and provides an additional source of income. On some farms, timber is the main source of income and the farming operations are secondary.

A lot of the forest land belongs to the state, the church, and the big timber companies. However, this discussion is not concerned with these holdings.

In Sweden, forestry and land ownership go together. Pine trees take from 80 to 140 years to mature, depending on the climate, which means that their care passes through several generations of a farming family.

The need for co-operation in this field is just as great as in the other phases of agriculture we have mentioned. However, forest owner co-operatives got a late start during the 'thirties. They are organized like the packing house co-operatives, but do not

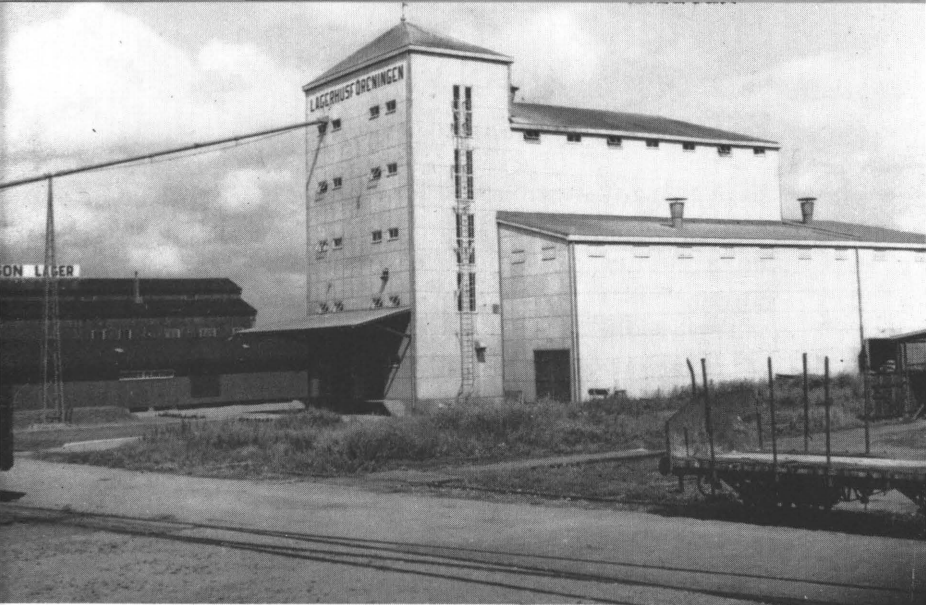


FIG. 8. Farmers' Co-operative Grain Elevator.

FIG. 9. A Swedish-built combine.



have as many members because a lot of farms do not have stands of timber. The forest co-operatives work on a county basis, but they also have a national union.

During the war when there was a heavy shortage of coal and other fuels, we had to use wood for heating. For running trucks and taxis we used wood cut in small pieces, or tar coal, which was also an important product of the co-ops.

The forest co-operatives, realizing that this could not last forever, started factories for further processing of the timber. There were sawmills, factories for impregnating the poles used for telephone and electric lines, and factories for prefabricating wooden houses. However, a co-operative wood pulp mill is still needed.

THE FOREST OWNERS' ORGANIZATION

	1935	1940	1946
No. of co-ops	26	31	29
Farmer members	6,400	31,600	92,058
Output in millions of dollars	2.2	12.2	62.1

Fruits, Vegetables, and Eggs

The co-operative idea has not been as successful with fruits and vegetables as in some other lines. Local and district co-operatives, particularly for fruit, are doing rather well. However, attempts have failed to form a national union able to influence the market.

The egg-selling co-operatives and their national union have worked very well — but it hardly seems

necessary to go into details, as they work on the same basis as the dairy and packing house co-operatives.

Agricultural Credit

There are two organizations for agricultural credit. One of them is "Hypoteksföreningarna," started over a century ago and dealing with what in Sweden is called the bottom credit. In these co-operatives the farmers can obtain loans up to roughly 60 per cent of the estimated value of the farm. The other, "Jordbrukskassorna," is more for the ordinary bank business: loans, bills of exchange, checks, etc. The latter have been growing rapidly. Farmers and the co-operatives generally do business through "Jordbrukskassorna."

There are a number of local co-operative fire insurance societies in Sweden, the majority of them starting a long time ago. They formerly worked independently, but now the societies are knit together on a national basis.

In recent years, automobile and liability insurance also has become available on a co-operative basis.

MISCELLANEOUS

Readers should not understand from the title of this section that it covers something "of less importance"! Many subjects dealing with the technical side of agriculture do not fall within the scope of this volume. Some of them, however, are closely allied to farmers' co-operatives; and many people who visit

this country ask certain questions which I hope to answer below.

Flax

Flax growing on a modern basis was introduced in Sweden just before World War II by Mr. G. Bendz, a farmer in the county of Halland, who became Agricultural Attaché at the Swedish Legation in Washington. This plant was previously grown in a few places for domestic use. It is cultivated now on an industrial scale, using up-to-date machinery for harvesting and further processing. The growers formed county associations and a national union on a fully co-operative basis. Factories were built by these co-operatives, and harvesting machines were provided for common use. Flax has proved to be very useful in rotation with grains and other crops.

Sugar Beets

Sugar-beet growing is of great importance in the more fertile parts of southern Sweden. Not that beets themselves are so profitable, but the leaves and pulp make excellent feed for the cattle. Also the necessary cultivations leave the soil in a high state of fertility.

Beet growing was introduced in Sweden at the beginning of the century. The growers soon formed themselves into an association, not a co-operative, but a rather strong kind of trade union. Price-fixing is negotiated with the sugar company, and there are frequently disagreements between the parties. On

some occasions there have even been strikes by the growers. One of these episodes may be worth mentioning.

The Beet Growers' Association negotiated with the sugar company about prices. It took a long time and they could not agree. The association resolved to strike and not to grow any beets that year. However, one big farmer did not join the others and signed a contract with the company. His colleagues did not say much but remembered him for a number of years. Wherever he went a small sugar beet was thrown before him. He went to a dinner party, and when he sat down there was a beet on the plate. He was attending a meeting of some kind and there was a beet on his seat. I could not understand how they could manage always to have a beet with them, but they did. The farmer almost got mad about seeing all these beets anywhere and everywhere, so at last his fellow farmers had to give up their joke.

This may be a detail without much importance, but it does show that even in the early 'twenties, there was a tendency towards trade unionism among Swedish farmers. Of course they would not have approved of that themselves, should anyone have made the suggestion. Thus sugar-beet growers were the predecessors of the Farmers' Union that appeared some ten years later.

Animal Breeding

As already observed, in Sweden most of the farms are small. For this reason each farmer cannot afford

to keep a stud bull, a stallion, a boar or a ram of his own. Farmers early started to use these beasts in common, forming bull co-operatives, etc. Thus they were able to keep only first-class males for breeding purposes. To a certain extent these co-operatives are subsidized by the government. They also receive help from the county agricultural societies, which are semi-official, and have county agents for the various agricultural subjects.

The latest development in this respect is the Artificial Insemination (A.I.), hitherto used in Sweden only for cattle. Here farmers have established co-operatives covering a much larger area than the bull societies. Veterinarians and assistants are employed for the insemination work. A number of bulls, Red Swedish and Friesian breeds, are kept at a Bull Station. Each morning the sperm is sent by post to a number of branches, each headed by a vet. In that way one bull station may be sufficient for a whole county.

Curiously enough there has been no government support for these activities. The farmers have arranged it themselves as co-operative societies. These societies need a lot of money at the outset, which is largely provided by shares paid by the members. In order to finance the whole operation, they get loans from co-operatives already consolidated such as the packing plants and dairies. In this way different co-operatives are able to support and assist each other.

Machinery

The small farmers have been working together for some time with machinery. They started with threshing equipment, and it was a common sight during the autumn to see a tractor hauling the threshing box from one farm to another. They also began using the tractor for work in the fields; bought ploughs, harrows, binders, combines and other implements. A society can obtain mortgage loans from the county agricultural society to buy this equipment.

Agricultural Societies

Our county agricultural societies were introduced about 150 years ago to encourage better agriculture and apply scientific achievements to practical use. They have been reorganized often since those days, but the aims are still the same. While their structures are still those of societies, in reality they are now semi-state. Nearly all of the funds come from the government, which controls their use and distribution. Most of the farmers are members of the society and pay an annual fee of forty cents. At the annual meeting in December the farmer members elect half of the Executive, and the county council elects the other half. The president is appointed by the King (which in reality means the government).

These societies have several agents in their employ: One for agriculture and draining, one for cattle, one for gardening, one for fisheries and one for house-

hold. There was also one for building and architecture, but that was changed after the founding of a co-operative for these activities, with headquarters in Stockholm and branches out in the counties.

Each agent has a number of assistants for the routine work, and the society is headed by a secretary or director.

It is true that such a society is controlled by the government, but the Executive has a lot of influence. After the Farmers' Union started in Halland we were very anxious to get our people on the Executive. At the first election we managed to fill half of the positions on the Executive with Farmers' Union people. At the next election, four years later, we filled the rest of the positions.

PRODUCERS' AND CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVES

Consumers' co-operatives in Sweden were working on a nationwide basis long before farmers co-operative schemes began to expand. On the consumers' side there were the local co-operatives, the districts, and the National Federation (Kooperativa Förbundet, or K.F., after the initials). Their chief aim was the retail trade in grocery goods.

In order to control prices they started a considerable number of industries too, the most famous being the big flour mills, the rubber factory, the margarine factories, and the light bulb factory. As an example of their efforts, the price of bulbs dropped from 1.30 kronor to 0.90 kronor after K.F. started production.

There were some features within the K.F. activities which we farmers did not like. For example, they boasted of their great success in the introduction of the K.F. margarine. We considered margarine as a disloyal competitor to our own healthy and first-class product, butter. We suggested that margarine should have a blue color in order to mark out the difference in quality and origin.

A number of farmers also joined consumers' co-operatives in order to supply their households. K.F. gave farmers' co-operatives much help in re-establishing some of their enterprises. Generally, however, there was much suspicion between the two groups. It was a common saying that there must always be a contradiction between sellers and buyers. The first aim of the farmers must be to sell their products at a fair and reasonable price, and of the consumers to buy as cheaply as possible. In commercial life, however, that difficulty is overcome every time a piece of business is done. Therefore, it does not seem impossible to make some kind of agreement between the two bodies.

As far as I can judge, K.F. and its branch co-operatives are governed rather differently from the Farmers' Federation and its unions and local co-operatives. The consumer-members do not have nearly so much influence in running the K.F. The directors and leaders put forward all of the planning and suggestions. Conferences only have to approve the proposals advanced. There is hardly any discussion at all. I do not think this way too democratic

and do not like it very much. Nevertheless, it has proved most efficient, and K.F. has gone from one success to another.

Relations Between Co-operatives

It is not my business to tell the story of the consumers' co-operative movement in Sweden. They know that very well themselves. Through books, pamphlets, study trips, films, etc., they have made themselves famous all over the world — and they are worth it, for they have done a most efficient piece of work. My object is to say a little about the relations between producers' and consumers' co-operatives.

In the 'twenties and early 'thirties K.F. was far ahead of us. We felt correspondingly inferior to them. We wondered whether we would ever be able to reach a position of influence within the community comparable to theirs. K.F., on their part, did not think we would either, and thought they could afford to give us a helping hand now and then!

However, the farmers' new scheme was put to work with some success. K.F. began to consider the matter. They realized that something might come out of all this, and at first they made some attempt to brake our development.

They soon found out that they would not be able to stop farmers' organizations. Then the question appeared to both movements. Wouldn't it be better to make an agreement than to fight? After negotiations, an agreement was signed by both parties, the chief points being the following:

1. Production, including dairies, packing plants and similar enterprises, belong to farmers' co-operatives.
2. Retail trade and distribution belong to consumers' co-operatives.
3. Processing belongs to both, and special agreements will be made on every occasion.

There were many exceptions, and what is worse, some points were not clear. Neither party believed in the other, or even tried to keep the agreement. It would not have been so bad if the quarreling had only been about the middle stage, the processing, but it was much more serious. They were fighting about both production and retailing.

Some packing plant co-operatives were grasping every retail shop they could lay their hands on; indeed, they were building up whole networks of butcher shops.

Some of the consumers' co-operatives, too, were buying or building packing plants and dairies, and even supporting private packers and butchers in their fight against farmers' co-operatives. However, there have been no objections on K.F.'s part to milk shops owned by the Farmers' Dairy Co-operatives.

The agreement was worth nothing. The situation became almost unbearable, and both bodies met again with the intention of making a new agreement, which they both were going to honor.

Part of the new document contains the principles, which are much the same as in the old. Along with this, there are special agreements dealing with each class of agricultural production, stating in detail what

belongs to consumers' and what to farmers' co-operatives. An old affair about a number of dairies belonging to consumers has been settled, and the enterprises have been taken over by farmers' co-operatives. Negotiations are still going on with the remaining groups, and I hope they will be successful.

Similar negotiations are taking place with the organizations of private businessmen. It is more difficult to arrive at any agreement with these groups because they are not as well organized and disciplined.

Co-operative National Unions and Federation

CO-OPERATIVES OF EACH CLASS—dairy, packing plant, forestry, etc. — are knit together in national unions. The principle is that co-operatives are supplying the local market, while the National Union is taking care of the surplus.

NATIONAL UNION OF PACKING PLANTS

I am taking the packing plants as an example because I am the most familiar with their operation. These co-operatives generally are rather large, one to each county.

Some of the northern co-operatives receive part of their meat from other districts because of the shortage of cattle and hogs in their areas. This is handled through the union, who also relieves other co-operatives of their surplus meat, and in addition supplies the larger towns and some of the isolated regions in the far north.

The union has built large refrigerators to care for surplus meat which accumulates during the periods

of high production. Some of this meat also is exported.

During certain periods, demand for some cuts is normally much greater than the supply. At Christmas, for instance, most families want a hog's head, the head being cured, smoked and decorated. Thus it forms the center of the Christmas table. There is a saying in Sweden: "Swine breeders ought to foster a hog having a head at each end during the winter and no head at all during the summer." Scientists and breeders, however able they may be, have not yet been successful. But the goal can easily be reached through co-operative refrigerators!

Distribution Problems

Before the war our only problem was with surpluses. Now there is more trouble with shortages.

It is not difficult to work out a distribution plan for the co-operative and union, but it is rather a job to keep the whole thing running. Frequently differences of opinion occur between the manager of the union and the managers of the co-operatives. The latter look only at the success of their own enterprises, whereas the head of the union has to think of the organization as a whole.

In these instances, however, the farmers in the executives of both the union and co-operatives have been able to realize that the smaller units often must be subordinate to the common interest.

In the beginning, the union was concerned only with bulk meat. The co-operatives worked inde-

pendently in the sale of sausage and other processed meats. Then there was a lot of grumbling among the managers of the co-operatives over the union's usurpation of their duties. However, many of the farmers supported the union in its efforts to control the distribution of all meat and meat products.

So it was built up, step by step. A Market Hall was erected at the headquarters in Stockholm one year, at the branch offices another year. The union engaged a chemist and staff for the newly established laboratory, in order to keep ahead of scientific development. They bought a retail firm in Stockholm to get a closer contact with the retail market. But the chief aim of the organization was to act as wholesalers.

The number of farmers joining the co-operatives was steadily increasing, largely owing to the support given by the farmers' union, but also due to the fact that packing plants were able to pay their members a fair price.

National unions of the other classes have been working much in the same way, and it is scarcely necessary to go into details concerning all of them. They are all knit together into the Federation.

THE FEDERATION OF UNIONS

The Federation is about the same to the unions as the unions are to the co-operatives. However, the Federation does not sell or buy any products.

The Federation started many years ago as a general agricultural society devoted to getting statistics and keeping accounts, arranging exhibitions, dealing

with technical subjects and investigations. Most of these duties still remain within the scope of the Federation's activities.

Since the farmers' co-operative movement started on a modern basis, the most important object of the Federation has been to act as the head organization of farmers' co-operatives.

Together with the Farmers' Union the Federation represents all farmers in Sweden during negotiations with the government on prices and similar matters.

Within the Federation appear the same problems as between the individual co-operatives and their union. It is quite natural that the people of the Dairies Union, the Packing Plant Union, etc., should see the problems from their special point of view. Therefore it is up to the Federation to see them from a general, or let us rather say from an agricultural, point of view.

Head of the Federation is Mr. E. Sjögren, a most capable person with contacts everywhere in Swedish industrial life and in the governmental agencies.

Within the Federation there are several departments that deal with different objects of common interest to the co-operatives or to farming as a whole.

The Publicity Department is under Director Bjelle, an extraordinarily able fellow. He started by publishing a cookbook for rural households. Everyone in the Executive laughed at Bjelle and thought the idea stupid and that he was mad. However, he did not give up and managed to publish the book. It sold at a very reasonable price, and the total

number of copies distributed has reached 300,000 (which is an enormous number in this country). The Publicity Department made a large profit, which was used as a starting capital for further publishing of many books and journals. Each week 370,000 copies of "Föreningsbladet" (Federation Weekly) are distributed.

Other Functions

The film business has hitherto not been quite as successful as the publishing; but has made considerable progress during recent years.

A correspondence school was started recently, thanks to profits made through publicity. Perhaps it is a little early to judge, but it looks as if the school is going to be a success too. The Idea School, Sångs-Säby, has already been mentioned, and is run by the Federation and the Farmers' Union together.

A Bookkeeping Department, with branches in different parts of the country, is keeping accounts for about two thousand farmers, but twenty times that number are consulting them. The accounts of the great majority of farmers' co-operatives also are being audited.

Taxation experts and lawyers are employed for the service of the members — rather a useful thing with the extremely complicated taxation system we have in Sweden.

The Statistics and Economic Investigations Department is considered the most important branch within the Federation. It is headed by Director

Stensgård, who is an expert in agricultural economics, a real scientist and quite neutral in his work and conclusions. Sometimes we think he is too neutral and ought to be just a little on our side. However, his complete honesty has proved very useful when it comes to negotiations with the governmental boards. They always believe in his figures.

Many activities fall within the scope of the Federation, but I should like to point out one in particular. Farmers' co-operatives must keep ahead of technical development and scientific research. On the whole it is better for this investigation work to be done by the Federation than by the separate unions, as the results achieved may be applied by more than one of these.

There may also be an opportunity to acquire a factory or enterprise of interest to farming as a whole. Indeed there have been several chances of that kind, but farmers' organizations did not always have enough money. For this purpose there has recently been established an investment fund of thirty million kronor, through contributions from both co-operatives and their national unions. Similar things on a much larger scale, but with different methods, were established many years ago by consumers' co-operatives.

Often, however, I think the Federation goes too much into details. I am not sure, for instance, that it is necessary to centralize the distribution of stationary goods used by the co-ops.

Farmers' Union vs. Federation

I may be blamed for having given too many personal details about my colleagues and friends within the Farmers' Union and Federation — but I have done it for a purpose. I want the reader to realize the true reason for differences and troubles that may appear between Federation and the Farmers' Union. Taken as a whole, the Federation people are educated, trained, clever — but sometimes a little too careful, too official, too distant from the ordinary farmer.

The union people, on the other hand, have contact with the broad group of farmers and feel as the farmers feel — but they sometimes think matters are simpler than they really are, and do not always realize that most problems need a lot of investigation and preparation before they can be solved.

Take for instance a milk strike during 1946. The Farmers' Union threatened to strike before consulting the Federation. It soon became evident that the matter was much more complicated than it first appeared. Federation people were very angry when they realized the situation — and they had reason to be. On the other hand, the Federation would not have done very much at that stage merely by raising claims and sending deputies.

At last both bodies were forced by circumstances to co-operate in government negotiations. We did not get all we wanted but quite a good deal of it. This was partly due to the above-mentioned back-

ground — and partly to the co-operation between union and Federation.

Some years ago the Federation people could not stand the union people, thought themselves much more competent in every respect, and considered they could fix everything themselves without any help from the union.

A journalist friend of mine used to put it like this: "To the Federation, the Farmers' Union is like a dirty crossbred peasant dog, running straight up into a breeding center." This may be an overstatement of the differences between the two bodies at that period, but perhaps the tendency in the saying was right.

The point is that we need both types in a democratic community, the learned and trained people as well as those in close contact with the soil itself and can clearly advance farmers' thoughts and claims.

The relations between the two head organizations of Swedish farming have happily improved very much in the course of time, both of them realizing that they cannot act separately. They may have acute differences like those mentioned, but on the whole they keep in contact with each other, and from now on there are always two representatives from the Federation when the Farmers' Union Executive meets, and vice versa.

A Realistic View

Many of my countrymen may blame me for telling foreign readers about the differences and struggles

within the organizations — but why should I not tell the truth. After all, development means not only planning and action — criticism and struggles (but not wars, I hope) also form part of it. In Sweden we are no angels, but just human beings, with some good qualities and some less good. And I suppose it is very much the same in every country.

There is a habit here, when writing pamphlets and articles, when delivering lectures, etc., in English or other foreign languages, to mention everything about this nation in a flattering way, to idealize anything we have done or are going to do. I do not mind describing things just as they are, including faults and failures. I have been trying to tell the truth as I see it. That gives a more realistic view of our development.

To end this chapter I will relate an episode from a meeting in Stockholm of farmers' organizations of the northern countries. There were a lot of speeches, as is common at such events.

The Finns thanked Swedish farmers for help given to them during both of the Finnish-Russian wars. They continued by saying that they were a little hurt, to start with, that Sweden did not take part in their hard fight against the enemy. Now, they realized that the Swedish government acted much more wisely than their own. It was great luck that Sweden had been able to keep neutral.

The Danes thanked us heartily for all hospitality shown to the great number of Danish refugees during that dark period. Norwegians did the same.

After that all of them talked about the achievements of Swedish farmers' organizations and how impressed they were when seeing the progress of co-operatives and the Farmers' Union. To start with, none of the Swedish participants said anything on this topic, but one could see in their faces how flattered and satisfied they felt.

At last, however, one Swedish gentleman, whom we knew did not talk very frequently, rose and said: "Dear friends and guests, I think we ought to be a little more frank towards each other. From all the speeches delivered in this room during an hour, one could easily get the impression that the Swedes are the most self-devoted and noble people in the world. It is not at all like that. While all of you in Norway, Denmark and Finland have been fighting the enemy and sacrificing every private advantage for the welfare of your nations, we have been sitting here rather quietly, and have had time enough for quarreling, fighting and nicknaming within our own ranks.

"You Norwegians, for instance, why didn't you mention anything about that 'permittent traffic' (German soldiers on leave passing through Sweden by rail) which we were forced by Germany to accept, and which is still an open wound in the relations between our countries?

"As to the progress of our organizations, if there is any, shouldn't we really be able to do something during six years of peace." After that talk, everyone felt easier and there was a better atmosphere in the room.

During the dinner I happened to sit beside the president of the Norwegian Farmers' Union, Arne Rostad. We discussed international affairs and particularly the preparatory I.F.A.P. conference, which was going to take place in London within a few weeks. Swedish farmers were not invited, and I was a little hurt, which I mentioned to Rostad.

"Well," said this gentleman, "you know, Sweden is not a member of the United Nations; you used to be neutral during the war."

I answered; "I didn't know that this was a question about nations or governments. I thought that farmers' organizations all over the world were going to form an international federation in order to take care of their interests."

"You may be right," Rostad replied, "and in due time I am sure this matter will be settled in a satisfactory way. But you Swedish people must realize that there is a little difference between us who have taken part in humanity's most gigantic and disastrous struggle and you who have been neutral. I should like to put it like this: You must be kept in quarantine for some time, then you will certainly be admitted."

I was rather hurt, and Rostad continued. "Don't you remember the talk of that gentleman . . . I didn't catch his name. Between friends we ought to speak quite frankly, say just what we think. Don't you agree with me in that?"

I did, and I admit he was right in putting the matter that way. It gave me the chance of telling him

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about Sweden's position during the war, which was not a very heroic one, but on the other hand may be quite understandable.

Youth Organizations, and Household Life

IN EARLIER TIMES women did a good deal of the farm work besides their care of the household. In the north there are still places where the men consider dealing with the cattle beneath their dignity, and some farmers' wives do most of the milking, both by hand and machine. However, this is changing rather rapidly.

Off the Farm Movement

For a long time there has been a movement towards the towns, particularly among the young women. The reasons are that there are more entertainments, lighted streets, picture houses, dances, etc. There are also more regular and shorter working hours, higher wages, and more comfortable dwellings with up-to-date equipment of every kind. It must be pointed out here that the government has favored the townspeople in building schemes and subsidies. I do not say that nothing has been done for the countryside, for it really has, but much less than for the towns.

This tendency among the young people seems to me to be wrong, for there really are a lot of compensations in country life. It may be a question of spiritual as much as of material things, but very few seem to have realized that yet.

When claiming better conditions for the countryside, farmers' organizations may have gone too far. They have painted rural life in too dark colors, and are frightening many away from the land, which is much to be regretted. There must be a change in this respect, and it is more or less a question of education and propaganda, as suggested earlier.

Youth Organizations

These questions demand a lot of consideration. Quite a good deal has been done already, and the youth organizations particularly have proved to be of great value. They have their study circles, their competitions in ploughing, milking, sports, growing roots and other plants, etc. There are folk dances, amateur theatricals, entertainments of different kinds, and so on. In many places country club houses have been built. Here the social events take place, particularly during the cold and dark season. The club houses are mostly co-operatives, with private people and associations of the district as shareholders.

I often wonder if we really have the right sort of structure for club houses. The young people go there on certain occasions — when there is a meeting, a lecture, a dance or some other kind of entertainment — but otherwise everything is locked up. The major



FIG. 10. Products of the country.

part of such a club house is a meeting hall, with a small stage for performances, and usually a kitchenette for coffee making. There may be a flat on the second floor, rented out to someone who takes care of the house as a supplement to other work.

I have discussed the matter with people from other countries, and I believe that the club should be organized in a different way. It should be open all the time (except during working hours) with a nice sitting room, a library, rooms for playing bridge, etc., and some sports grounds attached to the club house. Young people need to have some nice place to spend their leisure hours with their fellows. Things should be arranged so that people feel bright and comfortable. This could be done in a number of ways.

RURAL HOUSEHOLD SCHOOLS

For training and education of future housewives there are the rural household schools, generally one in each county. They are supported by government and county councils like the farmers' schools and are often situated in the same place. The ideal would be that every future housewife should have the opportunity of passing through a household school, but unfortunately there is a long way to go before reaching that goal. The present figure is only 6-7 per cent. Girls from 18 to 23 come there for a five-months' course. They get practical as well as theoretical training in everything pertaining to the rural household, including poultry and hogs, account keeping and economics.

When visiting these schools I was surprised to see

the great number of looms for weaving carpets, curtains, cushions, etc. Of course, the girls are making nice things, but from a labor-saving point of view (so important in farming nowadays) it would be cheaper to buy these articles in the shops.

However, I have been told that weaving is most soothing and comforting for the mind. Our great writer, Selma Lagerlöf tells in her famous novel *Gösta Berlings Saga* about the young Countess Dohna who nearly went mad from all her love affairs. She took up weaving, and it cured her of her malady. I hope it is not like that with the girls of the household schools.

There must be something in the weaving, not to be realized at the first glance. I should like to put it like this: "Weaving is to the mind exactly the same as cooking to the body."

Some ladies do not agree with me about weaving. They consider it a most pleasant kind of work, which should not be taken away from the homes. They particularly point out that it is a question of quality as well as of the fine ancient culture of the countryside. The quality of hand-woven towels and sheets could not be compared with that of factory-made things. They do not require nearly so much mending and repairing, for example. These ladies may be right, and know these matters better than I.

The household and farming schools are not at all the same thing as the famous Scandinavian Folk High Schools. The former give training for future work, while the Folk High Schools give a general education to people who did not have the chance to pass col-

lege examinations. Most of the students attending Folk High Schools are more than twenty years old. Attendance at one of these schools is considered a good background for entering a farmers' or household school, but is not compulsory.

We Pick a Household Adviser

Education is not only for youth, it is for adults as well. New methods and improvements are constantly appearing. In farming, the county agricultural societies did a lot to spread knowledge. On the suggestion of the vice-president of the Halland Society the Executive took up the question of engaging a household adviser. We all agreed that it would be a good idea, and a number of applications for the position were received. Our secretary picked out three of the best, and the ladies were asked to come down to Halmstad for testing.

I shall always remember this episode. There they were, the Executive — stern, middle-aged men. Eleven of them looking most critical and earnest, without a smile or a movement in their faces. And the teachers coming in one at a time, to deliver a lecture. I could not help pitying them.

But they did it all right, these girls, and we picked out two of them — one spirited and vital, the other more commonplace but with nice manners, which certainly would attract the housewives. We couldn't agree within the Executive and had to vote. The first lady got five votes, the second six. Our president, a former university professor, was among the minority — and he didn't like the result. In a very angry way

he told the oldest executive member, a J. P. and a pioneer in the earlier stages of the peasant movement, "There you were wrong, Mr. X!"

Generally we liked our president very much. He often supplemented our "farmers' point of view" with the "human point of view" — but he sometimes lost his temper, and that was rather human. This time we could not agree with him. We had voted in a democratic way, and thought the question ought to be settled without any comments. There were never any reasons to regret the choice of Elsa Lindström.

Her competitor was all right too, and it wasn't long before she became Household Adviser in another county, and now is the head of a Household School.

Miss Lindström soon became popular among the housewives of Halland. She went around in her car, telling them about new methods of household work, and new labor-saving tools and machines. She often had her car packed with odd things, and sometimes had to attach a little trailer to her car.

During the war, when we had no petrol in this country, we had to run our cars on producer gas. The gas producers were very odd looking and no decoration to a car.

On one occasion, she went around with the complete equipment for canning fruits, berries and vegetables hanging behind her vehicle. A lot of people had met at the country club house, where the demonstration was going to take place. When they saw her unfastening her tinning machine they couldn't help saying: "What an extraordinarily ugly-looking gas producer you have this time."

It was evident that the majority of the country kitchens needed to be repaired and modernized. Elsa Lindström helped a lot in this work, and got designs and sketches which the local builders and carpenters had to follow.

With building problems Miss Lindström got help from an architect engaged by the County Agricultural Society. This man specialized in farm buildings and dwelling houses on the holdings.

Healthy Pigs

Often there was the problem of central heating and sanitary equipment. It may be worth while, in this connection, to tell a little anecdote showing how the point of view concerning these matters has changed in Sweden during half a century.

Somewhere in the south of Sweden it happened during the eighteen-nineties that a farmers' club had a meeting. They held a lengthy discussion on the questions of hygiene and health.

One big farmer got tired of the discussion, being more a man of practical farming. "I will give you some practical hints how to care for the laborers' household pigs. I have tried it myself with great success. I simply make a little box for the pig in one corner of their kitchens, very close to the stove. Then they can throw all the waste direct to the pig. You bet it saves a lot of labor!"

All the others were getting more and more surprised as he spoke, and some of them could not help saying, "But could that really be so healthy?"

He replied, "There is such a lot of talk about hygiene and health, nowadays. But I will tell you, gentlemen, that never in my life have I seen such healthy pigs!"

I could not guarantee that that story is true — but it is a good story.

In due time this building business was taken over by a co-operative started by the Federation with the national unions as shareholders. It was centralized in Stockholm with branches in different parts of the country. This new co-operative has been working very well, but the other plan with the architects attached to the (semi-state) county agricultural societies wasn't so bad either. I am not sure that centralizing is the only way of settling all questions.

Laundries

One of the best things was the introduction of the co-operative laundries in our district. Washing was among the hardest jobs for the rural housewife, and besides took a lot of time. The problem could have been solved with household washing machines. However, these were expensive, and to have the complete equipment with a drying plant was quite impossible for a separate household. Co-operation seemed the best way of solving the problem and Miss Lindström advocated it most eagerly. She soon ran into some resistance. Many a housewife put it like this: "I don't want to bring my dirty and worn-into-holes washing to a co-operative laundry and show these ragged things to everyone."

Our adviser had a terrible job to convince the ladies that washing always was supposed to be dirty, if not, there would be no reason for taking it to a laundry; and that all the holes ought to be mended after washing. By and by she was successful, and the farmers and their wives started a co-operative laundry in the southernmost part of the county of Halland. They got premises in the basement of a newly erected country club house. The society covers rather a large area, with 200-300 households as shareholders and members. The enterprise proved to be a success, and within a year they had to enlarge it to double the size.

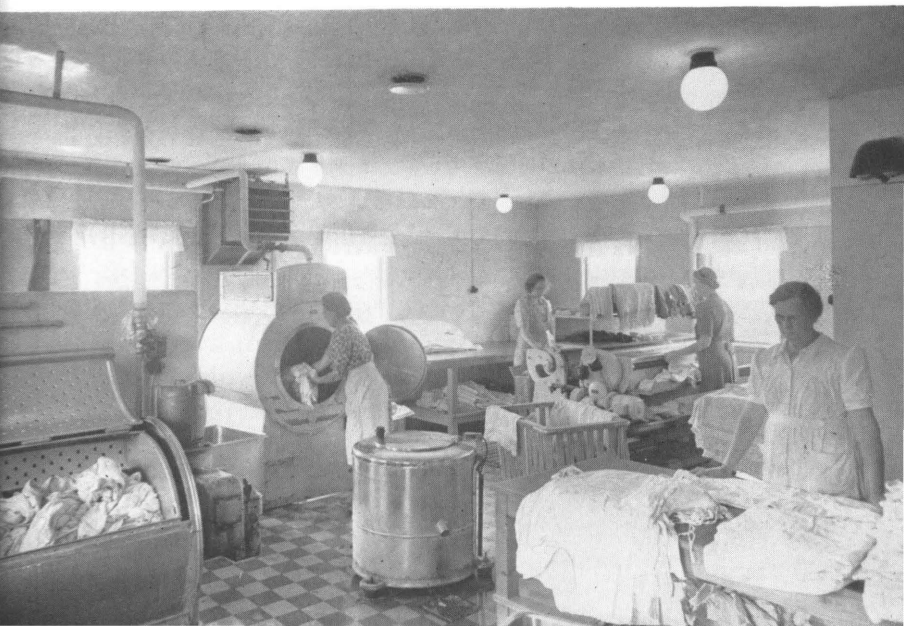
Soon afterwards they took up the same idea in the village of Getinge, near my place. Washing clothes is not exactly my line but my wife was most active in the work for the laundry, so I know quite a lot about it! The co-operative was formed, Executive elected, and they started planning a building and machinery.

The building was erected in connection with our co-operative dairy, the steam being delivered from the dairy at a reasonable price. The equipment included washing machines — centrifuges for getting the washing "half dry," a steam mangle through which most of the washing passed when leaving the centrifuge, and ironing machines. After leaving the mangle, the sheets, towels, tablecloths, most of the underwear, etc., were ready to take home. Shirts and some other things, instead of being mangled, were brought to a hot-air drying room. A pressing and ironing machine completed the job.



FIG. 11. Lessons in the Household School.

FIG. 12. A co-operative laundry.



To start with, the wives came down themselves to do their own washing, supervised by the lady manager who had to take care of the machines. It was the old idea of not showing other people their dirty and ragged things. This way cost 35 öre per kilo. They soon realized that it was better to leave the work to the manager and her assistants and pay 45 öre. The washing is delivered in the afternoon for soaking until next morning. Then the washing is done and is ready to take home about noon the next day.

The Grand Washing

It ought to be pointed out that washing is most likely a much greater event in Swedish households than in American ones. At the turn of the century the "Grand Washing" took place only twice a year, in spring and autumn. That has changed, of course, and now it comes once a month or once every six weeks. Previously such a monthly washing cost my wife in cash for hired labor, soap powder, etc., about five dollars. Now the account from the laundry amounts to \$3.50. In reality there is much more difference than that. She had to give the woman who came to do the work board and lodging for three or four days (and that lady is impossible to engage any longer). The greatest difference of all is that the washing coming from the laundry is ready to be put into drawers and on shelves.

Previously the actual washing took two days. After that came hanging up the clothes for drying, which could be done in the open air during the summer.

In winter, however, the heavy baskets had to be hauled up to the attic, where drying took at least three or four days, and then be carried down again for stretching, mangling and ironing.

The whole house was turned upside down for about a week. At a certain period during the procedure there were sheets, towels and other things on every table and seat in the whole house. I had great trouble finding a place for my typewriter!

In the comparison of prices made above, the work done by my wife and the maid we had at that time is not counted. So conditions are much more in favor of the laundry than the figures show.

Even now some of the housewives, out of pure prejudice, do not admit the success of the co-operative laundry and do not join the society. Well, we don't mind; there are at present about 200 members and the laundry has recently doubled its capacity.

One lady, a friend of my wife, disliked the laundry very much. "We need a co-op bakery," she said, "that is very useful for us country women. But the laundry is no good, the washing we can do ourselves."

It had really become a question of prestige to her not to accept the value of the laundry, and to talk about that institution was forbidden when my wife met her friend.

On one occasion when this lady was overwhelmed with work after a big party, my wife suggested, "Can't I take down all your washing to the laundry? You will have it back the day after tomorrow." The lady gave way and after two days she got back her table-

cloths, napkins, etc., examined them very carefully, but didn't say a word. I have a feeling she will join within a short time.

Laholm was the first to have a laundry, Getinge the second, but then they came one after the other in this county and in other parts of the country. They all proved most useful and of great help to the housewives.

Food Preserving

Preservation of food is an important matter in the rural household. We do it in different ways: potting, canning, bottling, salting, smoking, etc. All of them require a lot of labor. This is much more important for us in the rural areas, as we sometimes butcher a hog, a lamb or a calf just for household use. There are also fruits, berries and vegetables growing on the farm or in the garden, which one wants to preserve and store for use during the winter.

Ordinary household refrigerators are extraordinarily good things, but their use is rather limited. They are for short-time storing, several days, or a week. They can hardly be used at all for vegetables.

In our co-operative packing plants we have big refrigerators for long-time storing of large quantities. In these establishments it is of course much colder, 5° instead of the 23° F. in the household refrigerators. Some of the farmers in this district have tried storing geese or ducks or moose for a couple of months, and it has been all right. However, these big places are not effective for individual storing. They are too far away from most of the farms.

Co-operation is necessary because equipment in the separate houses is far too expensive for ordinary people. The idea now is to attach a refrigerator to the village co-operative dairy, and have it equipped with boxes for individual households. You could hang a carcass of a hog in your box and take out once a week just what you need for that period. It would be the same for many other foods. All that preserving, salting and so on would not be needed, and a lot of labor would be saved. There may be a good deal to learn from America in this respect.

Help For Housewives

Women's institutes are doing a lot of information work in most parts of Sweden. In the county of

FIG. 13. Modernized farm kitchen.



Halland, however, they do not have any footing. Instead there is the Women's Branch, SLKF, of the Farmers' Political Party. These ladies are doing a lot of social work besides their political activities. In many instances they are working on the same lines as women's institutes.

The wives of the small farmers and agricultural laborers are frequently overworked, and have few leisure hours. SLKF has managed to buy and to run vacation homes for these women. For this purpose they receive grants from the government and county councils as well as from farmers' co-operatives. I could not think of anyone more worth a holiday than these wives. They ought to have a rest from their household and children, and most likely from their husbands too. The hardest problem is finding someone to replace them at home, but it has even been possible to arrange this.

Rural housewives expect more from a new government scheme concerning "Home Nurses," which has just been put into action. This plan is not for actual illnesses, for these nurses do not have anything to do with doctors or hospitals. Their job is to take care of the home when the housewife is away or for any reason is not able to work, herself. Even when the wife is going away to a vacation home, the nurse is supposed to replace her.

The aim of this chapter has been to show that united efforts and co-operation can do wonders in household affairs. I know that these pages should have been written by a woman and not a man, but

I could not find anyone willing to do it. I have therefore submitted the manuscript to my wife for consideration and am glad to state that we agree on essential points.

Price Fixing Machinery and Agricultural Wages

UNTIL THE EARLY 'THIRTIES our farm products moved through a comparatively free market, with only moderate customs barriers. Then came the agricultural crisis which forced farmers to co-operate in order to survive.

The price of farm commodities dropped so sharply that the individual farmer was losing money every year. This was brought about by excessive imports of wheat, corn, and oil cakes at very low prices.

To counteract these imports, the government devised a plan whereby home-grown products should be used first, and the imported products used only as a supplement. Consumers grumbled about having to use the Swedish wheat for baking, "Still more black in the bread." Actually the quality of bread was not so bad after the new varieties of spring wheat were introduced.

The prices of commodities were not definitely fixed, but were allowed to move within certain limits. Thanks to the work of the co-operatives we were able to keep them close to the upper limit.

Milk was the exception to the general rule, and, of course, a most important one. The price was fixed from time to time, but a clearing between different groups of milk producers also was introduced. A certain fee was deducted from every litre delivered. The fund obtained in that way was distributed as an additional price to those of the farmers who delivered milk for processing, because retailing paid better than butter or cheese making. The clearing, however, included more than that — farmers living in poor regions and on small holdings got more than those living in the fertile plains and on comparatively big farms.

In addition the surplus butter had to be exported and sold abroad at a very low price. Co-operatives engaged in the export trade got subsidies, originating from the above-mentioned milk fees, in order to be able to pay a fair price to their farmer members. All this was done through co-operation between the government and the National Union of Dairies.

The system was much more complicated than that, but I am afraid I have already gone too far into details, and that the reader may have some trouble in understanding the structure of the scheme.

I do not say that this scheme gave large profits to farmers, but it helped us to keep our heads above water. It is essential to note that results were reached through common action of the government and farmers' organizations. It should also be clear that during this period the problem involved getting rid of or taking care of surpluses.

Wartime Changes

This was the state of affairs until September 1, 1939, when everything was reversed. After the outbreak of the war, our communications with other countries were cut off more and more, and we had to rely on ourselves. Surplus was changed into shortage, and the government started rationing one product after another. Price control was introduced at an early stage in order to prevent a rise in prices — beginning with foods as the most important product and continuing later with other goods.

The government had had some bad experiences during the first world war, when there were few farmers' co-operatives. The Ministry of Food had to market a lot of goods themselves, with great losses both in quantities and in cash. Goods were not distributed in a fair way either, some groups of people getting a considerable quantity, some almost nothing — and there was a terrible black market.

In 1939 it was quite different. Through the work of the co-operatives and unions, farmers' products were already running in rational channels from producer to consumer. The government realized that this organization could be used as an instrument for rationing. They put the question to our unions, whether it would be possible to hire or rent farmers' co-operatives and establishments during the war.

We answered that our organizations were started for quite another purpose, namely to favor farmers' interests; consequently we could not rent them out for an entirely different purpose. We had, however,

no objection to working with the government's food board, and this was arranged. It would be an overstatement of the moral character of our people, including the farmers, to say that there was no black market at all, but taken as a whole it was not so bad.

Without price control and rationing, prices would have risen tremendously and all farmers would have made large profits. This did not happen, however, and profits were rather moderate. In fact, many farmers reported a loss during the war.

Before the war it was said by many politicians in this country that the government was subsidizing farming. I do not think that was right, because from the same point of view it may be said that the government was subsidizing quite a lot of industries engaged in the home market.

If it had been true, then it would be equally true that during the war farmers were subsidizing all Swedish consumers (because in a free market without price control and rationing, prices would have increased considerably and given large profits to producers). No doubt that is still true in many respects. The price of Swedish-grown wheat, for instance, was 30 kronor per 100 kilo and imported wheat 50–60 kronor in 1951.

This is not an argument for top prices, which also must include bottom prices during certain periods. It is much better to have an even price during a long run of years, than a perpetual rise and fall. This foolish talk about the government and consumers subsidizing farmers must be brought to an end.

PRICE DETERMINATION

The principles of the system for determining agricultural prices in Sweden during the war were, and still are, as follows: The whole agriculture in the country, on all farms and holdings, is still considered as one single enterprise.

Through statistics the "income side" is estimated, which means quantities of different products leaving the relative enterprise. Goods sold from farmer to farmer do not come into consideration; for instance, seeds, grains and hay for feeding, and livestock.

Kinds and quantities of necessities required for "the enterprise" also are calculated from statistics (goods and products originating from Swedish farms, not included). These represent costs, and quite naturally that side includes interest, rent, and wages. It should be noted that not only the paid labor wages were calculated here, but also the work done by the farmer and his family, the farmer getting a certain amount for the management of the farm.

Prices of fertilizers, concentrates, etc., are easily found. The figure for the labor, including farmers' and family labor, is put at the same rate as the collective agreements between agricultural employers and workers. This figure may be corrected to some extent by comparing with statistics available concerning agricultural labor. The essential point is that both the farmers' work and paid labor shall be counted on the same basis.

In this way they get the total costs, which must be covered by the total income. The quantities of prod-

ucts being already estimated, and the total income already known, it is only the question of putting the right prices on the different products to get the balance.

One trouble is that the crops have to be estimated in advance, before harvesting and threshing are done. Should there be a difference of more than 4 per cent of the calculated total income, the prices are adjusted accordingly in order to restore balance again within the 4 per cent limit. As the income of milk is about 50 per cent of the total income, the adjustment is mostly done by revising the milk price.

All this may sound rather simple, but in reality it is very complicated. A large staff is engaged by the Food Board to calculate all quantities and figures and to distribute money and subsidies.

There is a kind of council attached to the Food Board, representing all groups within the nation, in order to enable a broad representation to follow the proceedings.

The difficulty is that statistics can be read in quite different ways, and that figures never tell the whole truth.

Here again the broad group of farmers appears in the background. They may have a feeling that the figures worked out do not correspond with reality — and they may often be right. This is why the price-fixing system had to be completed or supplemented by negotiations between farmers' organizations and the government.

It is the intention of both the government and

Parliament to continue with the price-fixing machinery in the future. It may be corrected on certain points, for example, by accounts from typical farms of different sizes and characters.

The present system does not give any top prices to the farmers, but the majority of farmer representatives fear that an unlimited importation of surpluses from overseas will occur again after some years. They prefer the present system with the "balance sheet" and controlled import.

AGRICULTURAL WAGES

The method of fixing agricultural wages is through collective agreements between the Employers' Association and the Farm Workers' Trade Union (not the Farmers' Trade Union, R.L.F.). Agreements are worked out on a national basis, with some additions due to special conditions in different counties.

Farm workers' trade unions started a little later than the majority of industrial trade unions. It was during the first world war that agricultural laborers realized the necessity for organizing themselves, and of course it was not long before agricultural employers did the same. During that war, with high prices of produce there was every chance of raising the wages, and it was done. Trouble came after the war when all prices dropped, often 50 per cent, and the wages had to follow suit. Then came disputes and strikes, and the atmosphere between employers and workers was extremely bad. During the 'twenties, however, prices and also wages stabilized, and there were few,

if any, activities, either from the trade unions' side, or from the employers'. Most of the laborers dropped out of their trade unions, and employers did likewise from their association.

About 1930 all this was started on a new basis. The Swedish Federation of Labor (LO), to which organization farm workers' trade unions are attached (like the industrial workers) took up the matter of organizing the whole group of farm laborers. The result was that most of the paid farm laborers have now joined the trade unions, these in turn being grouped together in the National Union of Farm Workers, attached to the Federation of Labor.

Employers also had to reconstruct their association and make it fit for negotiations regarding wages. The present agricultural wage rate is almost four times that of 1937. Farmers have been forced to pay higher wages in order to secure help because of a corresponding increase in industrial wages.

Indivisibility of Wages and Prices

Thus in principle, negotiations on wages were carried out quite independently of negotiations on produce prices. It soon became evident, however, that there was a connection between the two. If farmers were to be in a position to pay reasonable wages, there had to be fair prices for the produce. Particularly when the scheme for price-fixing, along with the "balance sheet" mentioned earlier in this chapter, was put into action, it became increasingly clear that prices and wages were indivisible.

The level of agricultural wages in Sweden is still lower than that in other industries. The target for future agricultural policy is that the wage standard of the agricultural population should be equal to that of the urban. It may take some time before that target is reached, and sometimes it even seems as if the urban people, particularly the great Socialist party, had quite forgotten that declaration.

No doubt farmers and farm workers have a common interest in fair prices of agricultural produce, but it frequently happens that the farm workers' trade unions do not realize that. They are attached to the Federation of Labor, where the urban influence dominates, and the urban population has an interest in cheap food. The Federation of Labor wields considerable influence within the Swedish community, and they employ it in dealing with all groups attached to them.

In the new French Agricultural Federation, *Confédération Générale de l'Agriculture (GGA)*, the agricultural workers form one of the groups. They realize that they have an interest in common with the farmers, concerning fair prices of produce, but they are also connected with the French Federation of Labor, which is helping them to negotiate with the farmers concerning wages. This scheme is quite logical and most interesting.

In England and Holland the common interest of farmers and farm laborers is not so clearly defined, but the tendency seems to be exactly the same as in France. Unfortunately we have not yet reached that state in Sweden.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Starting with the great Constitution and Parliamentary Reform of 1866, most farmers joined the Conservative party. Since the Conservatives advocated custom barriers against foreign wheat, the farmers felt they were in good hands.

However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, agricultural production shifted away from crops in favor of livestock. In the interests of obtaining cheap foreign feed for their cattle, some farmers became Liberals. Sweden was rapidly becoming industrialized, and the laborers organized trade unions in the spirit of the new Socialist party. Few farmers were attracted by this new party with its Marxist ideology, but many of the farm laborers were.

For a time before the first world war, there was co-operation between Liberals and Socialists. Their interest in solving social questions served to unite them. But it soon became obvious that their ideology was different and their liaison did not last very long.

Socialists under their leader, the great statesman Hjalmar Branting, developed rapidly, and both Conservatives and Liberals had to adopt a defensive attitude towards the newcomers. The battle was between Socialism and nonsocialism, and agriculture was nearly forgotten. Conservatives and Liberals gravitated more and more towards urban parties and the farmers did not feel satisfied. Nowhere did they find a political group willing to take up agriculture whole-heartedly. As a result they formed the Farmers' Party (*Bondeförbundet*) in Sweden in 1914, which was reconstructed in 1921. Out of the 230 representa-

tives in the Second Chamber of Riksdagen (Parliament) there were twenty-one representing the Farmers' Party in 1921. This figure has increased continuously and there are at present thirty-nine. The composition of the directly elected Second Chamber is shown in the following table.

Conservatives	.	.	.	.	23
Liberals	.	.	.	.	57
Farmers' Party	.	.	.	.	30
Socialists	.	.	.	.	112
Communists	.	.	.	.	8

Formation of the Farmers' Party was tremendously criticized, particularly by the Conservatives. Even today there are many farmer M.P.'s among both the Conservatives and Liberals, and even a few among the Socialists. Within co-operatives and the Farmers' Union, all farmers, regardless of their political affiliations, are working very well together.

The Farmers' Party can be considered a typical "class" party, like the Socialists. But unlike the latter, the Farmers' Party will never be able to gain the majority in the Second Chamber because they are in a minority of the total population. Nevertheless, as a result of their joint efforts with the other parties, the Farmers' Party has been able to accomplish a good deal.

"Cow Dealing"

The most striking feature within the history of the Farmers' Party was what took place during the early

'thirties. In Swedish political history the event is called the "Cow Dealing."

The Socialist party wanted social reforms, but at that stage they did not command a majority. As this was during the worst period of the agricultural crisis, the farmers wanted fair prices for their products and protection against unlimited imports.

The two parties made an agreement complying with the old rule, "If you will help me, I shall help you." They were thus able to fix both the social legislation and the produce prices. In Conservative and Liberal papers there was a terrible outcry in relation to the "Cow Dealing." They considered the Farmers' Party a league of traitors.

For many years there was a combined government of Socialists and farmers, and the result of the "Cow Dealing" justified the methods. The leaders of these parties were competent men of practical policy. They did not care much for doctrines and such, thinking more of the results achieved. Their reasoning was, "Laborers and farmers are the two broad groups of the country. Why should they not work together to their own advantage — and to the advantage of the whole community." As a matter of fact, the 'thirties were a rather happy period — so much so, that Conservatives and Liberals stopped grumbling about the "Cow Dealing."

The second world war brought a Coalition Government of all parties. The tendency after the war pointed towards a growth of the left wing. In 1945 the Socialist party held the absolute majority in

Riksdagen, and consequently formed a government of their own.

“Cow Dealing” was brought to an end, the new Socialist government introduced a strong labor policy, without considering the interests of the others. The Farmers’ Party again started co-operation with Conservatives and Liberals, in order to counterbalance the influence of Socialists. In recent elections the Communist party has lost ground considerably. They have no contacts with any other party. The small number of communist M.P.’s are almost considered as traitors towards their own country.

The Rural Party

In the beginning, the Farmers’ Party was a pronounced class party, dealing exclusively with the interests of the agricultural population. During recent years, however, they have realized that a broader background and a broader program is needed. Hence much more interest is now taken in the cultural and social side — schools, education, housing, etc. The name has been changed to Rural Party. A lot of country people — craftsmen, shopkeepers, teachers, etc. — also are joining the party.

Many times there has been discussion as to whether farmers should have their own party, or whether the farmer M.P.’s within the different parties should influence as much as possible the policy of their respective party.

No doubt, the Farmers’ Party in Sweden has been of great value to the agricultural population. In

Parliament it has done the structural work for farming policy, in which also farmer M.P.'s belonging to other parties have joined. It is generally acknowledged that the previous leader of the party, Bramstorp, held one of the key positions within Swedish politics.

Political activity is only one of the means for acquiring better conditions. Still more important in the long run is the work carried out by co-operatives and the Farmers' Union.

Two things stated earlier are again worthy of mention in this connection. One is the S.K.L.F., the women's branch of the Farmers' Party, the other is S.L.U., the youth branch. Both of these have proved to be most valuable in political as well as other activities. Thanks to them the spirit of co-operation has been kept alive not only among the men but also among women and youths.

Looking Ahead With Agricultural Policy

THERE ARE MANY different types of farming throughout the world. We find, for example, the Soviet collective farms, very large and highly mechanized. At the other end of the scale are the submarginal plots of India and China which require large amounts of manual labor.

Collective Farming

In some ways it may be efficient to farm on a large scale, as in Russia. But is there not something missing from this system? What about the factor of the "love for the soil"? A farming population, settled on smaller holdings more or less permanently, acts as a stabilizing influence on the community. That is something worth considering when so many people are constantly on the move from place to place. This may be regarded as merely romantic, but I at least do not think it is. In innumerable writings and lectures I have advocated co-operation of farmers — but I never went so far as to recommend collective farming, which is co-operation at its extreme. This may

sound irrational, and perhaps I cannot defend my position in a logical way. It may be a question more of feeling than of sense — but I am happy to feel that most of my countrymen agree.

This does not prevent me from agreeing to experiments on collective farming even in this country. In fact, there has been such an experiment made in Jämtland, in north Sweden. A number of small holders started a collective dairy farm, with the herd and cowshed as common property, but the remainder on an individual basis. It has not been much of a success, partly owing to the inferior quality of their cattle. Certainly there will be more experiments of that kind, and a bill has been introduced in Parliament in order to stimulate affairs of that kind. I have no objection to this, for I believe so much in individual farming that I scarcely think there is much risk that collectivism will be successful.

On the other hand, Swedish farming cannot consider development in other countries as something indifferent, something to be neglected. If individual farming is to survive, it will be necessary to drop a lot of the ancient methods and keep abreast of technical development. Of course this process is going on constantly, but it is a question whether it would not be worth while to accelerate it during our time.

In a country like Sweden, where the major part of the holdings are rather small, it is difficult to modernize the farming industry. It might even be necessary to reorganize the type and size of the holdings.

Government Plans for Agriculture

Since 1942 a government committee has been working out a scheme for future agricultural policy. Twelve or thirteen of the group represented farming in one way or the other. The remaining members came from different groups and different political parties. Investigations and preliminary reports are innumerable, and it is fortunate that Sweden is a country rich in wood pulp and paper. Heaps of papers have piled up on my desk and it has been a heavy task to go through and read all of them.

In April, 1946, the committee delivered their final report to the government, a volume of 1,000 pages without including appendices.

They all agreed upon better farming schools, and more of them, better education and information on technical matters, and more support for scientific and research work. Tractors, machinery and implements should be available to every farmer. This should be arranged through machinery co-operatives, private contractors or other kinds of machinery centers. Loans and subsidies should be granted to enable farmers to buy complicated and expensive equipment.

The Minister of Agriculture at the time (1942), Axel Pehrsson-Bramstorp, postulated the following:

1. The standard of living of the farming population ought to be similar to the standard of corresponding groups of the urban population.
2. This goal should be reached through fair and suitable prices of farm produce.

3. For estimating the costs of production it is necessary to fix what is called a "base holding" with not too small acreage. Should too small a farm be taken as a basis, both costs and the price of produce will become too high.
4. The base holding must be well managed.

This is very easy to say, but it means a tremendous amount of work, investigation, and planning to get something out of these short sentences.

Larger Holdings

After innumerable discussions, the committee came to the conclusion that the size of the base holding ought to be about 40 acres on an average. Roughly, that corresponds to what is called a "family farm" in Sweden. The goal should be to obtain still larger holdings, say 60 to 75 acres, and in the report these are given the name "normal farms."

From the point of view of a stranger these sizes may be thought rather small. But it must be remembered that the average size of Swedish holdings at present is even smaller. Consideration must also be given to the fact that the average includes also a number of comparatively large farms in the fertile parts of the south and the midlands.

This does not necessarily mean that the larger farms should be cut up. Actually they are capable of more efficient operation than the smaller ones.

In some cases it would not be necessary to change the size of the holding. Some farmers can supplement their income from their own forests or by working in private and government forests. They may also do commercial fishing, and possibly craftwork in

their home. A farmer with a small holding can increase his income by growing crops which bring top returns per acre of land invested. Truck gardens, orchards, and poultry farms can be profitably operated on a small holding.

For some holdings new land could be found by reclaiming flooded areas around lakes and rivers. Actually there is not much virgin soil left in our country worth bringing under cultivation. The general feeling is that we have enough land to feed our people. If our present acreage were increased, it might pave the way to surpluses with their attendant problems.

I do not altogether agree with this reasoning. As I say, I am only relating the common opinion. It seems to me that with the new machinery now available the cost of reclaiming land would not be prohibitive. Regarding the problem of surpluses, actually there is no world-wide surplus of foods. It is only a matter of buying power and adequate distribution.

Finally, with a bigger population and an increasing standard of living there will most likely come more demand for animal products. This would mean that a lot of plant food would have to be changed into animal. It would also mean that a much greater number of calories would be needed to satisfy the people.

Several other methods of increasing the size of the holdings are possible. The government could buy forests or other land from some of the larger

holdings. The plan suggested by the committee is to divide up some of the smaller farms and add this land to the adjoining holdings — thus making two larger farms out of three small ones.

Income Subsidies

However, the individual farmer is not required to dispose of his small holding in order that his neighbors may enjoy larger ones. If his income is substandard, he may receive a subsidy. These sub-



FIG. 14. Typical farm laborer's cottage.

sidies are not based upon prices, and are limited to the lifetime of the present owner. He may sell the farm to his children, but should he want to sell to someone else the government has the right to buy at the same price.

Such a plan will cost the government an enormous amount of money, and there has been a great deal of discussion and criticism of the committee's report.

With the countryside concentrated into fewer, large holdings, it becomes more difficult to get good schools and decent roads. The young people dislike settling down in these remote places, especially the women. Farmer members of the committee point out these facts in expressing their fear that the rural areas would become impoverished. The representatives of Capital argue that larger holdings will decrease the price of farm products, hence keeping industrial production costs low.

Other critics claim that this plan would drive many farmers from the land. Actually there has been for many years a tendency among farmers to leave their small holdings. The aim of the committee is only to link development in rational channels, and to make the change as smooth as possible for both community and individuals.

It is much more difficult to modernize farming, with its large numbers of small units, than to do the same with the wood pulp industry, for example, which is concentrated in a few large mills. Yet it must be done if the individual European system of farming is to survive.

In Sweden we have tried to get a draft scheme. There must, of course, be a balancing between different points of view. The committee may be wrong in some respects — but it is an attempt.

Swedish farming is in the melting pot.

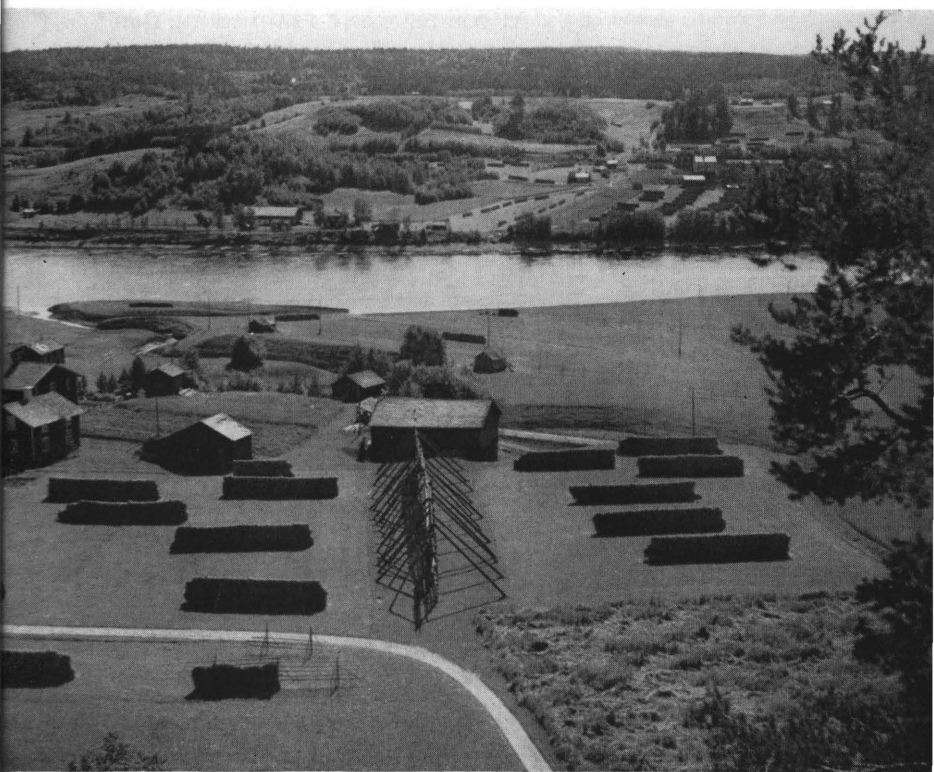


FIG. 15. Hay harvest in one of the river valleys of the North.

Targets for Tomorrow

AN AUSTRALIAN ONCE SAID to me that Swedish people had the "spirit of co-operation" inborn. I am not quite sure. It may be a question of education too. Be that as it may, Swedish farmers are good co-operators. Sometimes it even looks as though they are too eager, and might possibly go too far. There are farmers in this country not willing to enter a consumers' co-operative shop or a private grocery shop. "We want farmers' own shops," they say!

In some instances they have already started co-operatives of that kind. Personally I do not think that necessary, or even that it is desirable. Some of the farmers most strongly pronounced in this direction would put it like this:

"I want to buy a plough from a selling and buying co-operative, manufactured in the Farmers' Co-operative Machine Works; the iron from the Farmers' Co-operative Iron Works and the ore and coal from the Farmers' Co-operative Mines, and I want to sell my products through farmers' co-operatives, which ought to retail them through farmers' co-operative shops in every line."

Should the commodities be sold only to farmers and people engaged in farmers' co-operatives? Of course, this is clearly an exaggerated question, as no one ever said anything like that; but a tendency in this direction can be traced among certain groups of farmers.

I think it is most important that this attitude should not exist. The problem has been touched on already in connection with the agreements between farmers' and consumers' co-operatives and private trade. It would be no use if everyone in this country who is running a business of some kind murmured to himself, "Perhaps I may not be in a position to carry on much longer. Farmers' co-operatives are expanding, and no doubt they will come along some day and take my business too."

This reasoning is only for practical purposes. We farmers cannot afford to have enemies everywhere. Negotiations and co-operation (also with groups other than farmers) will bring more success than will bickering.

Let us stick to the essentials. It was quite necessary to reorganize the marketing of our farm products to get control of the bulk, in order to influence prices and margin. It was important too to obtain control of the necessities.

Moving Ahead

Let us consolidate our own enterprises in every respect and keep ahead of technical development, and get as many farmer members as possible. This is very

much a question of education, particularly of the coming generations, who did not take part in the pioneer work and do not know very much of the state of affairs before co-operation started.

There are still some lines within farmers' co-operation that ought to be put on a new basis, for example the marketing of fruit and vegetables. There also may be a need for insurance co-operatives.

Finally, monopolies may appear, trying to get more than their fair share. If so, co-operatives must be started in order to cut down the margin to a reasonable level.

The production of milk powder exemplifies the struggle against monopoly. We used to process the milk exclusively into butter and cheese. During recent years, however, the demand for milk powder has been increasing steadily. It is used by bakeries, chocolate factories, etc., and it would not be surprising if in the future it were to become nearly as important as butter or cheese. Factories for processing milk to powder have already been started, both by private enterprises and farmers' co-operatives.

There are signs of a fight between the different interests in this line. It seems natural that farmers should control the major part of the manufacturing. Milk is the essential product of Swedish farming, and milk powder is only an intermediate stage, not the ultimate.

However, we must draw a dividing line between our activities and those of other groups. Co-operation really means working together, not only with our

fellow farmers, but also with people representing lines other than agriculture, all of them being our customers.

What has co-operation done for Swedish farming, and where would we be today had there been no co-operation?

The first question can be answered in a number of ways, although I doubt if even a statistician could give the full answer in terms of dollars and cents. The answer to the second question, of course, lies in the results co-operation has achieved.

Through co-operation the farmers have managed to reduce the middleman's margin to a reasonable level. Most of the farm products are marketed through our co-operatives, which means that the profits belong to the farmer shareholders. The existence of the co-operatives also has prevented the private enterprises from taking more than their proper share of the business.

Since we control most of the production, we have been able to assemble the processing and distribution functions into a smoothly operating routine. This has saved the farmers a lot of money.

Co-operation has permitted us to centralize the processing and distribution units and to equip them with the latest labor-saving equipment. Our refrigerator plants and storehouses are capable of holding surpluses when the market is overstocked and releasing them when goods are scarce. All of these points have resulted in savings and additional profits for the farmers.

A critic might say: "Why do you Swedish farmers worry so much about all your co-operatives? Look at other countries — their governments are fixing prices, and so is the Swedish government. Everything can be done on a governmental basis."

I think his reasoning would be sadly wrong. The prices fixed by the government will always be concerned with retail or wholesale sales. The co-operatives are concerned with the price that the producers get.

Co-operative Influence

There is another point worth considering in this respect. The existing government may be pro-agriculture, in favor of fair prices for farm products. Then one day along comes a new government with quite another attitude towards the farming industry. This has happened many times both in this country and elsewhere. In such circumstances there is no one but ourselves to care for our interests, and even we cannot do it without grouping our forces. Through the co-operatives we control the bulk of agricultural production, and through the Federation and the Farmers' Union we are able to negotiate and exercise influence. These bodies represent a considerable power in the farmers' hands, and also a power within the community.

However, we do not abuse this power, but use it only as a defense and in order to achieve a living standard equal to that of other groups.

Co-operation alone cannot make farming prosper-

ous, but there is no doubt at all that co-operation is one of the most important means by which we can reach the target — fair returns and a fair standard of living for the farming population.

International Outlook

SWEDISH FARMERS, LIKE those in many other countries, care very little about what happens outside their own country. They have been "peninsular," which in this connection means much the same as "insular." This is not surprising, since no other group within a community has its roots so deeply imbedded in the land.

On the other hand, agriculture is influenced in many ways by the world market. Hitherto farmers have left it to the commercial interests to deal with foreign countries. I never was sure that this was right, for even farmers have a good deal to learn from other countries. Other groups have learned through international co-operation, why not the farmers as well?

The first world war brought a lot of evil, but in some respects there was a development in a positive direction. For example, the international co-operation of industrial laborers got its definite structure after that disastrous struggle. It should not be denied by anyone, even if he does not belong to the group in question, that the organization of the workers, national and international, and the raising of their living standards, is one of the most important features within the history of mankind.

During the period of the treaty of Versailles, however, politicians and economists forgot the biggest and broadest of all groups, the farming population. Neither the politicians or economists, nor the farmers themselves, thought that to be a problem worth consideration.

However, it very soon became so. During the agricultural crisis in the early 'thirties there was a frightening impoverishment of the farming class. It cannot be expected that the second world war, devastating the world to a much greater extent than the first, will bring many gifts to humanity — though there will probably be some. Will one of them be that farmers all over the globe will parallel their efforts, in the service of a starving mankind, and to their own advantage? There are a lot of signs — the names Hot Springs, F.A.O., I.F.A.P. — point that way.

Farmers United

A most striking feature in postwar times is the fact that farmers in quite a lot of countries have organized themselves in rather firm unions or federations.

No one can discover anything very definite yet, but a closer contact between farmers of the world is surely on the way. It is no easy task. Differences in living standards, income, and technical development are enormous. I remember, for example, a saying by Gandhi's friend, the Indian Peasant Leader, Professor Ranga.

“With malnutrition and even starvation dominant

in my country and a lot of others, it ought to be forbidden to feed grains and other foods to animals. That means a waste of food, which should not be allowed."

When we discussed the technical stage of agriculture in India compared with my country, he mentioned that their draught animals were not very good. I thought that tractors were now coming into the discussion, but instead it was the question of improving the breed from which they got their oxen, in order to get a better working capacity.

Is it not a curious fact that in Sweden agriculture is midway between the horse and the tractor; America and Great Britain have definitely entered the tractor age; but in India, farming is standing on the threshold between a poor and a better variety of draught oxen! (Of course I do not know much about rice-growing; oxen may be particularly apt for that work, but there must be a tremendous difference in the stage of development.)

In spite of these differences, there seems to be such a strong undercurrent uniting farmers all over the world, that it could not be stopped. This does not mean that the ordinary farmer has very many feelings of that kind. But the leaders of farmers' organizations realize that unity is essential, and they are able to influence the broad groups of members.

The pioneers in this respect were the "Confédération Internationale de l'Agriculture," started long ago, with their seat in Paris. This body worked on a scientific and informational basis, with big confer-

ences at certain intervals in order to survey the technical stage.

There was also the International Agricultural Institute in Rome, for keeping statistics and collecting figures concerning agriculture.

However, these bodies were not built up for doing any actual organization work, or for influencing governments or states — except through information supplied.

The International Federation of Agricultural Producers (I.F.A.P.) are the organizational pioneers. The body that has taken the initiative toward uniting the farmers of the world is the National Farmers' Union in England, with its president, Sir James Turner. During recent years the idea has been strongly supported by farm organizations in many lands, particularly the United States and Canada.

Conclusion

Once upon a time Syd Carter of Stratford-on-Avon gave his opinion about a certain man: "He is not a farmer, he is a wheat-grower." Farmers throughout the world will understand such a saying, but certainly not all urban people.

To us of the land, farming means much more than a way of making a living.

Two things are sacred, soil and life. This does not mean that we are not allowed to touch them. We break the soil, we drain it, treat it with various tools and implements. A real farmer is always trying to improve his land. We take lives every day — that is

part of our production, but those are the individuals. The breeds, the races survive, and it behooves us to improve them as much as possible.

Everything cannot be counted in dollars and cents.

To maintain farming as a living industry, to maintain a prosperous and happy farming population, is worth many hardships and troubles.

Farming throughout the world is in the melting pot.