

# PACKAGING

## Can It Boost

## Sale of Eggs?

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Before 1890, the most common type of wholesale egg package in the United States was the keg, containing 70 dozen eggs packed in oats or similar material.

This package was not convenient to handle or to ship and a need was felt for a different type of container. As a result the 30 dozen case was developed. The retail merchant in those days received his eggs in this 30 dozen case. He packaged each dozen eggs in a paper sack and passed them on to the consumer.

Textbooks written during the 1910-20 period casually mention that eggs may be packed in cartons holding 12 eggs. Advertisements appearing in the U.S. Egg and Poultry Magazine thirty years ago suggest that eggs packed in cartons will arrive in better condition and that customers will pay top prices for eggs packed in good containers. The strange thing about all this is that the 1957 cartons closely resemble those 1926 models.

### Little Change In 30 Years

Three decades have seen little improvement in the style of egg cartons. The only evident change is the color and style of type used to denote brand names.

Customers apparently like to see what they buy and like the attractive appearance of products displayed in transparent containers. Observations in supermarkets have disclosed that shoppers sometimes will tear open a carton or break the seal in an attempt to see the 12 eggs packed within. The paper sack of the 90's in some ways afforded convenience in viewing the contents although little guarantee that these contents would safely reach the haven offered by the icebox.

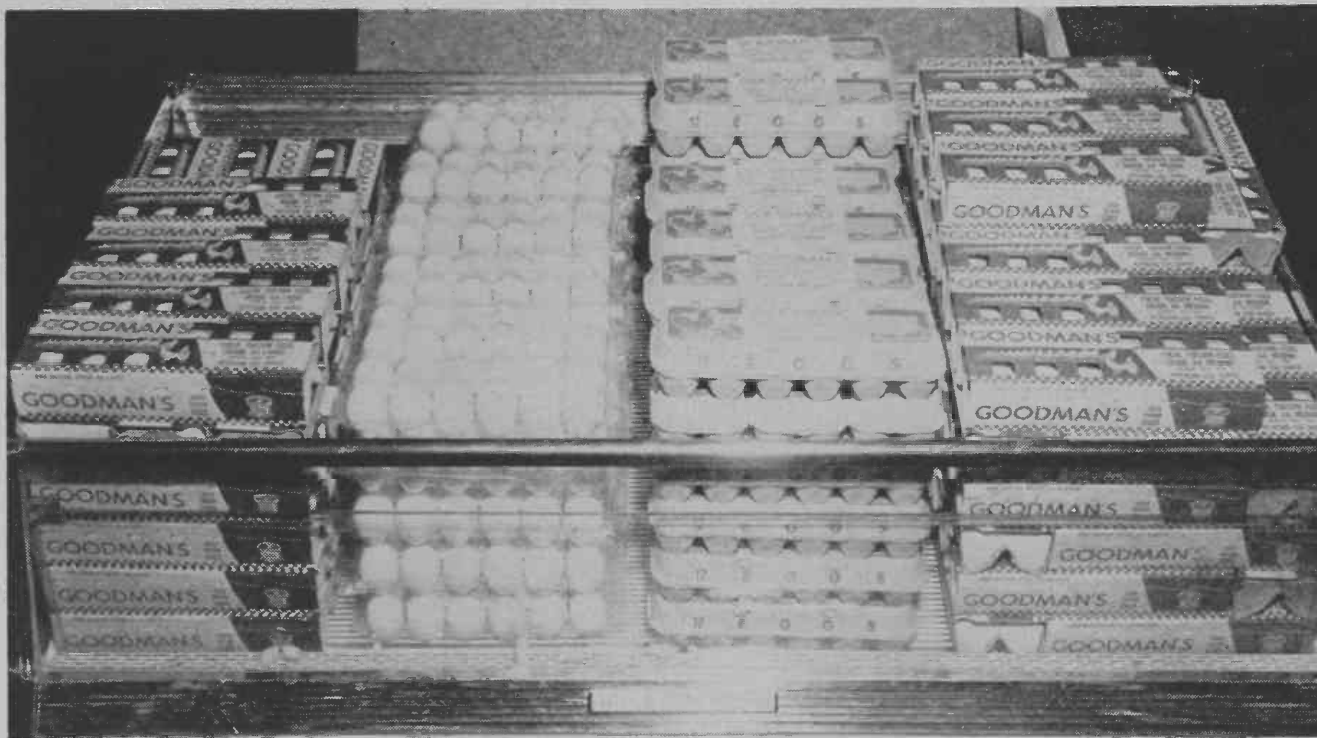
During 1955 twenty-one million dozens of shell eggs were sold to consumers in Arizona. This represents per capita

annual consumption of 252 shell eggs. The national per capita average of shell eggs consumed, not including frozen or dried eggs, was approximately 303 during this period.

### State Lags In Egg Use

Thus Arizona is about 60 eggs below the national average of egg consumption. This suggests the need for an egg merchandising program. The sale of eggs can be increased several ways. One method is to lower the price to the consumer. Another is to make the merchandise more attractive.

With this in mind, the Poultry Science Department of the University of Arizona conducted a survey in four large supermarkets in the Tucson area in an attempt to learn the effect of packaging on egg sales.



Three carton types used are illustrated in the photo. One type was the 2 x 6 molded pulp carton. The second was a six-window carton which had about 40 per cent of the cover devoted to windows, while the third was a transparent all plastic carton which allowed visibility of the 12 eggs within.

### All Eggs Were Same Grade

All the eggs used in the survey were grade AA large. Egg sales in these four supermarkets for six weeks prior to the survey were used as a base. This base was set at 100 per cent.

After the introduction of plastic cartons the sale of eggs increased 28 per cent and remained at or near this level during the six weeks of the test. It became apparent that the plastic cartons attracted the customers to the egg display and probably encouraged egg sales.

### Window Carton Preferred

Total sales were divided between the three carton types as follows: 20 per cent pulp, 60 per cent window and 20 per cent plastic. The figures indicate that the consumer preferred the window type carton, but it also showed that 20 per cent of the consumers still like to buy eggs in the molded pulp carton. The plastic carton was accepted, but buyers' preferences suggested that some housewives probably thought the plastic carton was too flimsy. These shoppers stuck to the comforting sturdiness of the pulp carton.

The survey brought out several facts. First of all, the shopper is attracted to new and novel displays. She likes to see something new, and if it is presented in

**BELOW, a view of the special egg display case. Left to right, 6-window carton, transparent plastic carton, pulp carton, and again the 6-window carton.**

an appealing manner she will stop and pause. This pause may induce her to buy.

### Extra Cost Stopped Them

Secondly, it was discovered that the consumer will not pay a premium for eggs in transparent plastic cartons. A few housewives regarded these eggs as something special and were willing to spend two cents more for a dozen eggs. But most were not convinced that the privilege of seeing all 12 eggs was worth two cents.

### Eggs Are So Breakable

It may also be pointed out that Arizona shoppers like the pulp carton. Apparently they feel that pulp cartons are stronger and more practical. It was noted that mothers with small children usually purchased the pulp carton. Perhaps mother's little helpers can be understandably careless with this carton and still reach home with the eggs intact.