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PHENOMENAL THREE YEAR POULTRY DEVELOPMENT

By HARRY EMBLETON, Poultry Husbandman.

The Tucson Poultry Status Three Years Ago—A Need for More High Quality Eggs—The Southern Arizona Poultry Association.

TUCSON and its vicinity have enjoyed a wonderful development during the past three years. Three years ago four commercial poultrymen had 10,000 birds between them. At the present time some sixty-odd poultrymen and women have collectively better than 60,000 birds. This development has not come about by any "fly by night" method, but has developed gradually as economic conditions warranted.

Many agencies have been instrumental in aiding in this development. The University of Arizona, through its poultry division and extension service has been one of the leaders in this movement. The Arizona Egg-Laying Contest with its consistently good results has indicated to the nation the possible results that can be attained from poultry in Arizona. The monthly reports sent throughout the country have resulted in many inquiries being received by the poultry division of the University of Arizona asking for further information regarding the possibilities of poultry raising in this section.

The Tucson Sunshine Climate Club have also been instrumental in many coming here to "try their luck" at poultry raising. Since the possibilities in poultry raising have become apparent the Tucson Chamber of Commerce has given its moral and financial support to many movements the object of which was to "boost the industry." They have come to realize that the income through the poultry industry has had a material influence in bringing about prosperity within the City of Tucson.

This development was made possible mainly due to the fact that there was a shortage of poultry products on the Tucson market. This shortage could be, and was, overcome largely through shipping in eggs and poultry from other states. A considerable proportion of the population of Tucson, however, was healthseekers. They wanted a fresh home produced egg

and resented having to accept a shipped-in egg. It was a common experience to the poultryman to be bombarded with people coming out to his farm in order to get fresh eggs. In practically all cases the poultryman had long since engaged his eggs to local merchants, so could not take care of this demand. Now, it is not necessary for the consumer to take the time and go to the expense to go to the country for eggs, as all of the local merchants carry a supply of freshly home-produced eggs.

As one merchant of one of the large retail stores put it: "There is nothing our customers are so cranky about as eggs. They insist that they must be fresh and home-produced. If we do not have them they will go to the other end of the city to get them."

Tucson had to have a certain number of eggs to supply its wants. When they were not being produced locally they had to be shipped in from other states. A survey showed that this was taking place and that at least three car loads of eggs were being shipped in monthly.

It was very interesting to note the reaction of the local poultry producers to the further development of the industry. They resented it and said that "in three years' time we will not be able to give our eggs away." Those three years have passed and the poultrymen are getting a better price for their eggs than they were receiving at that time. They could not seem to see that Tucson had to have a certain number of eggs, and that it was just a question as to whether these wants were to be supplied with local eggs, which were so much more satisfactory to the consumer, or whether the merchants would still have to continue to send out of the State for their supply of eggs. Today most of the poultrymen see the situation in its true aspect although there are still a few that are pessimistic about the development.

Three years ago a peculiar condition existed on the Tucson market.

Eggs were selling from 15 to 20 cents less per dozen than they should have in accordance with a competitive price. The poultrymen were making their own competition among themselves. A realization of this condition brought about a more or less informal organization, the object of which was to do away with the competition among themselves and established a common price for eggs consistent with outside competition. California was the natural competitor and prices were set on California prices plus the cost of transportation and rehandling the eggs on the Tucson market. These quotations were published in local papers under the association heading, and have been one of the main factors in establishing prices on the Tucson market. There was a feeling that the association was formed in order to create an "egg trust" to arbitrarily fix prices. This, on the face of it, could not be even if it was so desired, for if prices were set in Tucson that were above California prices the merchants would immediately ship in California eggs for it is to their interest to sell eggs as cheaply as economic conditions would warrant in order to move a greater volume of eggs. Competition is the only factor that can "fix prices." The fact that eggs are selling ten cents a dozen below last year's prices shows that competition, and not any organization, is the price-fixing factor.

Another benefit which was brought about through the poultry organization was an understanding in regard to grades. The poultrymen by the exchange of ideas and experiences came to realize that it was the consumer who must be satisfied and that in order to satisfy them the poultrymen must establish grades with which the consumer could be satisfied and recognize. These grades were established through the efforts of the poultry organization.

During the spring of the year there
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A PHENOMENAL THREE-YEAR POULTRY DEVELOPMENT

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was always a normal surplus on the market. This condition could not be avoided as long as the hens insisted on laying more eggs at that time than at any other time during the year. This, however, made a difficult situation for both the producer and consumer. It resulted in cheap eggs in the spring and high-priced eggs in the fall. The poultrymen, realizing this, have made an organized effort to have cold storage facilities established so that this normal surplus of spring could be carried over to the period of scarcity in the fall, thereby making it possible to sell a cheap egg in the fall due to increasing the volume of eggs that could be put on the market at that time. This condition would benefit both producer and consumer alike. To date, however, the organization has not been able to have these facilities established. They are still working on this question, however, and hope to make it a reality in the near future.

Another condition that was soon realized was the fact that half of the poultrymen's time was spent in marketing his product. If this time could be spent on his farm he could increase the size of his flock and his profit accordingly. A realization of this condition brought about the organization of the Southern Arizona Poultry Association, Inc., a formal organization of the old organization. Stock was sold based on the number of birds on each farm. A permanent manager was hired with a bookkeeper, egg grader and candler, and truck driver, as his working organization. A delivery truck was purchased and warehouse rented. This organization included 80 per cent of the poultry producers in the Tucson district.

In addition to the new organization saving the poultryman time in his marketing, the fact that all eggs are pooled, graded, and candled, assures the consuming public a more uniform product of better quality. It benefits the retail merchant as he realizes he will have a constant supply of home-produced eggs of excellent quality, and uniform grade which can be had at a moment's notice.

Just how long and to what extent this development in poultry can continue is problematical. It will depend

considerably as to whether cold storage facilities can be provided. It will also depend upon the demand for cold

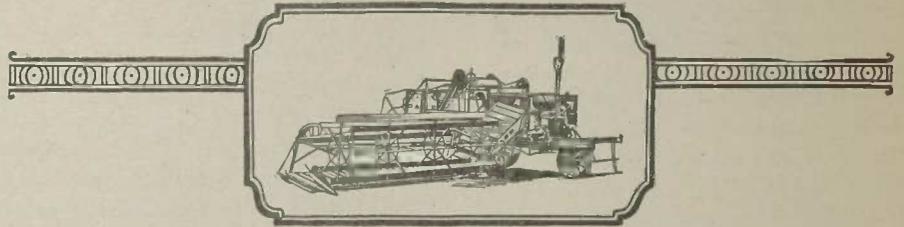
storage eggs. There is a certain class of trade which will normally continue to use this class of egg.

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