

Co-op Research Aids the Farmer

Farmer owned cooperatives do more than produce and market some of the highest quality food in the world. Many co-ops also maintain extensive research staffs who probe for better ways to grow, process and preserve the agricultural products of their farmer members.

modern foods are significantly improved over their fore-runners of 20 years ago. And many of these improvements have come from co-op laboratories and research farms.

Faster Cabbage Harvesting Yields Better Kraut
Sauerkraut is probably America's favorite form of cabbage. But this everyday

nutritional bargain might well have disappeared from grocers' shelves had it not been for the foresight of grower groups like Pro-Fac Cooperative in Rochester, New York.

The farmer-growers who own Pro-Fac market their well-known Silver Floss sauerkraut throughout the East and the Midwest. Ten years ago, most of their cabbage crop was hand-harvested. Workers with large butcher knives walked down long rows of cabbage plants, severing them from their roots and throwing them on a pile.

At today's labor costs, this kind of harvesting technique would be quite expensive. Recognizing the need for an improved mechanical harvester, Pro-Fac growers with the backing of their co-op management, began experimenting with different types of machines.

Through that program, one Pro-Fac grower developed an improved harvester which is now being used across the country. The machine travels down the cabbage rows, slashing the heads neatly from their stalks and loading them onto a truck, all automatically. The harvester cuts labor costs way down and helps to keep sauerkraut prices more reasonable by letting one man do the work of four hand harvesters.

An added bonus of mechanical harvesting is that the cabbage arrive at the processing plant sooner. Because they're fresher, these cabbages help make a higher-quality product.

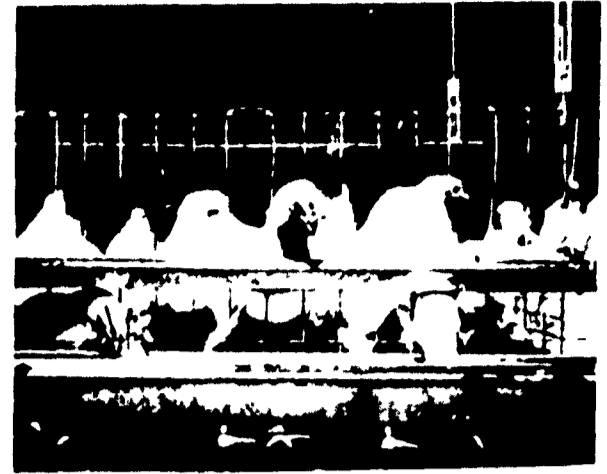
Better Eggs from Midnight Snacks
What does a chicken do when you turn the hen house lights on at midnight? She eats.

This is not a schoolboy riddle; it's a fact about chickens that has now generated some very careful scientific scrutiny leading to management practices that help keep eggs one of America's best nutritional bargains.

Poultry scientists have been turning on the hen house lights for many years. Among the first to throw the switch were the researchers who work for Gold Kist, Inc., a poultry producers' cooperative based in Atlanta, Ga.

The egg that a hen lays in the morning has been forming in her body all night. The formation of the egg shell can put a tremendous strain on the bird's calcium reserves. If she runs low on calcium, she will lay eggs with thin shells.

When hens turn in for the night, the egg-making process goes into high gear. If it weren't for the midnight snack that Gold Kist growers



These chickens aren't night owls, but they sure act like ones; while the rest of us are safely in bed, these Gold Kist layers spend their nights bathing in incandescent light and snacking on top-quality feed. Gold Kist found that layers exposed to light and a late-night snack yielded eggs with strong shells.

give their hens, the shells on the eggs produced would be thinner and more of them would crack.

Cracked eggs are wasted eggs, and waste drives costs up, both for the farmer and the eventual consumer.

The Flavor Stays In
Other cooperatives have also been successful in their

attempts to improve the quality of the foods they produce through science - including jelly makers!

Welch Foods, Inc., the famous grape growers' cooperative located in western New York, uses a special technique for recovery of volatile fruit essence. Simply stated, this means that the molecules of pure fruit flavor that used to "go up in steam" in earlier jelly and jam manufacturing processes are caught and forced back into the boiling fruit mixture.

The result is richer fruit flavor, flavor so good that some independent tasters feel that it beats the jam and jelly put up in Grandma's kitchen.

Better Food for a Better Future

All of this research, and much more, has helped farmer cooperatives bring American consumers food products of unrivaled quality at affordable prices. Co-op efforts have benefited all American agriculture, and consumers as well.



"Volatile Fruit Essence Recovery" may not mean much to you, but it means plenty to the people who make savory jams and jellies from grapes like these. Welch's devised an essence recovery technique that makes today's grape spreads tastier than Grandma's.

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