

# Farm co-op business at record high

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. farm cooperatives' 1979 combined business volume of nearly \$56.3 billion was a record high, even though the number of cooperatives continued to decline, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture official.

Randall Torgerson, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Cooperative Service, said the business volume was 29.1 percent higher than for 1977 and resulted from higher prices for many farm products marketed by cooperatives and for certain farm production supplies sold by cooperatives.

He said the number of cooperatives dropped from 6,736 to 6,445 and memberships declined from 5.8 million to 5.7 million.

Torgerson said beginning with this 1979 report, USDA will compute annual figures on a calendar year basis. In the past data were collected for cooperatives' fiscal years ending between July 1 and June 30.

Figures in the 1979 report are compared with 1977 figures for three reasons: The change in reporting years caused some 1978 figures to be omitted; a new computer system allowed USDA to gather 1979 figures more quickly than those for 1978; and because 1977 is the latest year for which there are published figures.

Total cooperative business volume consists of three com-

ponents: marketing (the value of farm products sold); farm supplies (sales of fertilizer, chemicals, fuels, feed and other inputs to members and patrons); and receipts from related services such as trucking, storage, ginning, and drying.

Marketing volume, up 29.7 percent from 1977, totaled \$41.7 billion. Marketing of all farm products increased with grain, the leading farm product, stock and livestock products, up 63 percent; miscellaneous products (hay, forest products, etc.), up 56.7 percent; and fruit and vegetables, up to 37.7 percent.

Farm supply volume of \$13.5 billion increased mainly from increased sales of petroleum products, feed and fertilizer. Petroleum products rose 52.2 percent, to \$3.8 billion; feed, up 12.5 percent, to \$3.2 billion; and fertilizer, up 13.5 percent, to \$2.8 billion. Other supplies (small hardware items, etc.) and farm machinery and equipment both showed an increase of 37.7 percent; and farm chemicals went up 36.8 percent.

Volume of other services related to the farm business rose to nearly \$1.1 billion, an 18 percent increase over 1977 volume.

The leading state in combined marketing, farm supply, and related service volume handled by cooperatives was Iowa with nearly \$4.9 billion, or 8.6 percent of the

total. Minnesota ranked second, with nearly \$4.3 billion and 7.6 percent. California followed closely with \$4.2 billion and 7.5 percent.

The decrease of 291 cooperatives between 1979 and 1977 reflects the continuing trend of merger, consolidation, and acquisition, Torgerson said. This decline also resulted from an intensive effort to contact cooperatives that had not

responded during recent surveys. In many cases, these organizations had been discontinued or no longer were operating as a cooperative, he said.

Minnesota continued to have the most cooperatives with 741. Other states, in order, were North Dakota, 431; Texas, 411; and Wisconsin, 410.

The national membership total of 5.7 million exceeds the number

of U.S. farmers because some farmers belong to two or more cooperatives. The 1979 membership total was down 1.2 percent from 1977 membership, reflecting in part the continued reduction in the number of farms and farmers.

Minnesota had the most co-op members with 551,666. Other states, in order, were Wisconsin, 347,965; Iowa, 322,759; and Illinois, 311,663.

## Pa. egg production up

HARRISBURG — April 1981 egg production in Pennsylvania totaled 356 million, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service. This was one percent above the 535 million eggs produced in April 1980.

The April average of 16.4 million layers was one percent above a year ago. Egg production per 100 layers was 2,174 compared with 2,167 in April 1980.

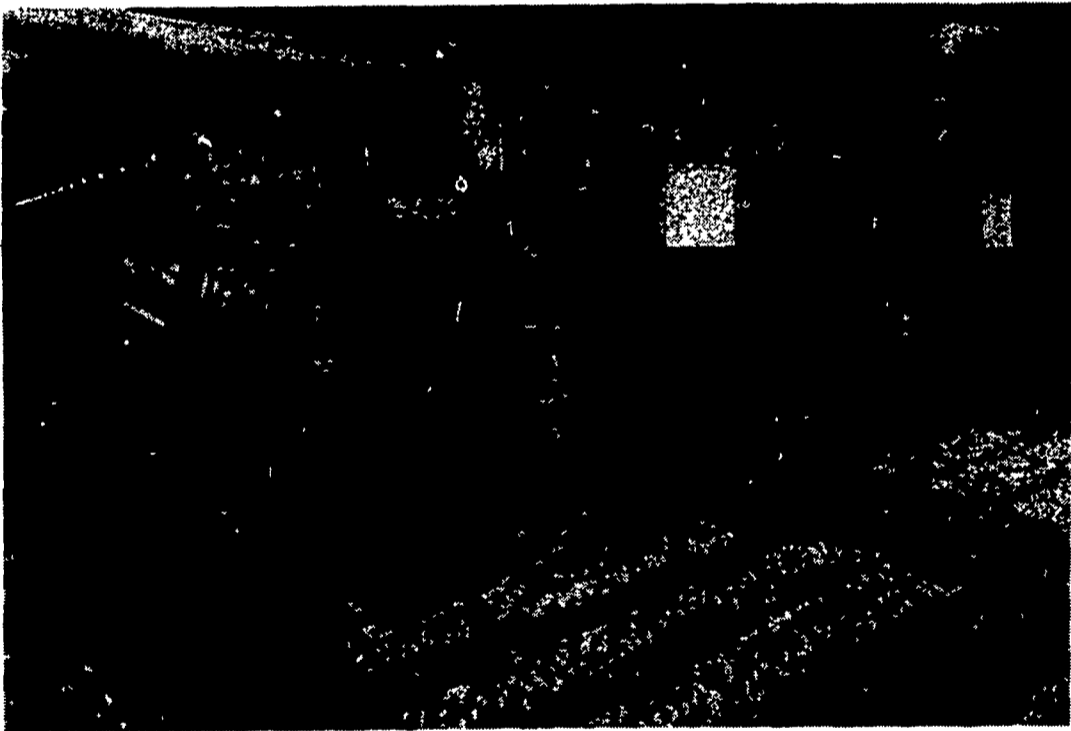
produced 5.72 billion eggs during April 1981. Less than one percent above a year ago. The number of layers for April averaged per 100 layers during the month was 2,018 compared with 2,023 a year ago.

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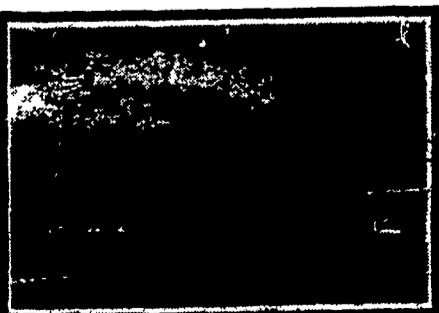


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