

Farm supplies accounted for the greater part of Canadian co-operative purchasing in 1971, with food products a very strong second. The co-operative purchasing of feed is particularly important in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. Food and petroleum products are the main commodities purchased co-operatively in the Prairie Provinces.

Co-operative purchasing of consumer items, especially food, has been growing steadily in recent years and now represents a substantial part of co-operative business volume. The sale of consumer goods started as complementary to the main business of providing farm supplies, and thus they were sold mainly to rural people. However, with the gradual consolidation of units into larger centres, more and more urban people have adopted co-operative purchasing.

The direct-charge co-operative, a new form of co-operative purchasing that has sprung up in the last ten years, is largely urban-based. In this system, the co-operative charges for goods at or near cost and the members pay a service charge on a regular basis, usually weekly, to cover the expenses of the organization. Direct-charge co-operatives have spread over Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces and a somewhat similar system, known as "Cooprix", is operating in Quebec. The Western provinces, which were already quite strong in co-operative supermarkets, have not yet adopted the direct-charge system.

Some co-operatives, especially in the Eastern provinces, market a variety of agricultural products and also purchase farm supplies. These, and the purchasing co-operatives, are generally local organizations serving farmers near a trading centre.

A large part of the co-operative marketing in Canada is carried out by province-wide organizations. Each of these assembles, stores and sells a few closely-related commodities; some of them, including most dairy-product and poultry-marketing co-operatives, process as well. Most of the grain and livestock marketed through co-operatives is processed by other firms, though some co-operatives do their own. For example, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool operates a flour-mill, and much of the livestock marketed in Quebec is processed in the packing-plants of La Coopérative Fédérée. Likewise honey, oilseeds, maple syrup, fruits and vegetables are processed in some co-operative plants.

A few marketing and purchasing co-operatives operate on an interprovincial basis. The United Grain Growers Limited has elevators throughout Western Canada and terminals on the Great Lakes