

The flow of grain from the farm to country elevators is regulated by a delivery-quota system that enables the Board to call for delivery of the kinds and grades of grain required to meet market commitments and, at the same time, to allocate delivery opportunities as equitably as possible among all grain producers.

Transportation

The producer delivers his grain, generally by truck, to a country elevator at one of the approximately 1,600 delivery points throughout the Prairies. The grain is then loaded into railway cars for shipment for domestic use or to terminal elevators on the West Coast, at Thunder Bay, the St. Lawrence ports and Churchill. Grain moves directly overseas from the West Coast and Churchill and, while some direct shipments overseas have also been made from Thunder Bay, the bulk of the movement is by lake vessel to the St. Lawrence export ports of Montreal, Sorel, Trois Rivières, Quebec, Port Cartier and Baie Comeau. Grain is also moved from Thunder Bay to Georgian Bay ports and forwarded by rail to the Atlantic ports of Saint John and Halifax for export during the winter when the Great Lakes are closed to navigation.

The Canadian Wheat Board introduced a new shipping system in 1969 to improve the flow of grain to export position. In the "block-shipping system," the delivery-points are divided into blocks or geographic areas consisting of particular railway-line groupings and the Canadian Wheat Board issues shipping orders for specific grades of grain by block. Elevator companies allocate these orders to specific elevators within the blocks thus ensuring that the required type and grade of grain is forwarded to meet a specific sales commitment. Grain handling at the port terminals has also been considerably expedited by a pooling system for railway grain-cars. Formerly, grain was allocated to elevator-company terminals according to the company originating the grain on the Prairies. This has now been changed, so that the required grade of grain for a specific shipment is allocated to the terminal awaiting the arrival of the vessel for that shipment. This avoids ships having to call at more than one terminal for the same grade of grain.

There were record grain-export shipments of 308,000,000 bushels from the West Coast and 361,000,000 bushels from St. Lawrence ports in 1971/72. The export movements from Churchill, Thunder Bay direct and the Maritimes were also at record levels.

Storage

Canada's licensed grain-storage facilities had a total capacity at August 1, 1972, of 673,000,000 bushels. The effective storage capacity ranges between 65 and 80 per cent of licensed capacity. The bulk of the storage capacity was in the 4,567 country elevators that had capacity of 377.8 million bushels. The 33 terminal elevators, namely at Thunder Bay, Churchill and the West Coast ports, had a capacity of 151.5 million bushels, while 28 transfer elevators at Great Lakes ports and export ports on the St. Lawrence and the Maritimes had a capacity of 128.5 million bushels. Another 23 elevators, with a capacity of 15.3 million bushels, were used to store grain prior to its processing.