



**EQUITY  
COOPERATIVE**  
Livestock Sales  
Association

*75th Anniversary*  
*1922-1997*



**Equity Cooperative  
Livestock Sales Association**

*75 Years  
Serving Livestock Producers*

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*Publishing Consultant*  
Thomas Friedlund

*Graphic Designer*  
Barbara Schepers

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August 1997

Dear Reader:

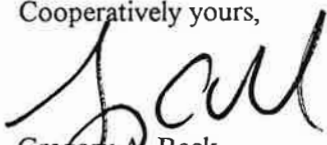
The following pages of *Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association - 75 Years of Livestock Marketing* provides an overview to the evolution of livestock marketing in the state of Wisconsin and throughout the region.

My successors: John D. Jenks, Russell G. Hvam and Charles F. Claffin, led this cooperative through periods of change, hardship, aspiration, acceleration and diversification. Through it all, Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association has grown and been strengthened to its current standing; Wisconsin's largest livestock marketing agency and the second largest in the nation.

This only proves to me that our strength lies in our members. Yes, the members of yesterday and today possess the very same goal; to derive an equitable price for the livestock they produce. Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association has constantly strived to attain that goal for each and every member.

Please take this opportunity to explore this historical passage. You'll be amazed at the leadership and strength that went into the fashioning of this time-honored organization. My hope is to carry on this great tradition and build Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association into an even stronger entity as it enters the 21st century.

Cooperatively yours,



Gregory A. Beck  
President and C.E.O.



# The State of Wisconsin

## CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION

HONORING THE  
EQUITY COOPERATIVE LIVESTOCK SALES ASSOCIATION

ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF WISCONSIN, I AM  
ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO SALUTE THE

EQUITY COOPERATIVE LIVESTOCK SALES ASSOCIATION

IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR 75TH ANNIVERSARY.

I COMMEND THEIR 75 YEARS OF SERVING AGRICULTURAL  
PRODUCERS IN THE MARKETING, MANAGING AND FINANCING OF  
THEIR LIVESTOCK BUSINESS. I EXTEND MY PERSONAL  
CONGRATULATIONS TO EVERYONE INVOLVED IN MAKING THIS  
CELEBRATION POSSIBLE.

PRESENTED WITH MY BEST WISHES FOR FUTURE SUCCESS!



DONE AT THE CAPITOL IN  
THE CITY OF MADISON  
THIS SIXTEENTH DAY OF  
OCTOBER IN THE YEAR  
ONE THOUSAND NINE  
HUNDRED NINETY-SIX.

*James G. Thompson*  
GOVERNOR



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250  
December 20 1996

Mr. John D. Jenks  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association  
East 10890 Penny Lane, United States Highway 12  
Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913

Dear Mr. Jenks:

I extend my personal congratulations to you and all the members of Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association on your 75th anniversary of helping livestock producers. In addition, I extend congratulations on behalf of the entire United States Department of Agriculture.

Few companies in the livestock industry can boast of 75 years in business, let alone developing the first national computerized cattle auction, and growing to become one of the largest cooperatives in the nation. Your longevity, ingenuity, and success are a tribute to your faithful service to livestock producers.

We wish you continued success as you serve the livestock industry.

Sincerely,  
*Dan Flickman*  
DAN FLICKMAN  
Secretary



National Livestock Producers Association

4851 Independence Street • Suite 200 • Wheat Ridge, Colorado 80033 • 303-423-4792 • Fax 303-423-6975

November 20, 1996

Mr. John D. Jenks  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association  
E 10890 Penny Lane  
Baraboo, WI 53913

Dear John:

On behalf of the members and Board of Directors of the National Livestock Producers Association, it gives me great pleasure to offer sincere congratulations to the Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association on reaching the 75-year milestone!

In an industry where fair and consistent representation of livestock producers in the marketplace is crucial, the Equity cooperative has excelled. Innovative and timely marketing and credit programs have become the hallmark of Equity as livestock producers are provided unparalleled service from a cooperative where integrity and expertise is the rule, not the exception.

The National Livestock Producers Association is proud to have counted the Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association as one of its members since 1943; and the Equity Livestock Credit Corporation since 1991. Many of the leaders of the National organization have been graciously shared by Equity through the years for which we are truly grateful.

Again, congratulations on the celebration of Equity's 75th Anniversary! Your organization has reason to be very proud of the work it has done on behalf of its members through the years.

Sincerely,

R. Scott Stuart, CEO

RSS/lp

National Feeder & Finance Corporation • National Producers Service Company • National Livestock Insurance Agency

USDA

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Rural Business -  
Cooperative Service  
Washington, D.C. 20250

December 19, 1996

Mr. John D. Jenks, President & CEO  
Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association  
E. 10890 Penny Lane  
U.S. Hwy 12  
Baraboo, WI 53913

Dear John:

I want to congratulate members and staff of Equity Livestock for reaching your milestone 75th anniversary. Equity has a track record as an innovator among livestock associations nationally and has truly put Wisconsin producers on the map for its accomplishments and foresight.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the association has been its effectiveness in adopting new technological methods of recordkeeping and electronic sales that have kept it on the cutting edge of industry trends. Equity's pioneering efforts to join with other cooperatives to provide shared office space, data processing, and other essential administrative services served as a model other cooperatives might well consider. Instead of sitting back and letting others pave the way, Equity has led with positive industry improvements that have gained it a reputation as a pacesetter. Equity has consistently ranked near the top in volume and dollar sales among all U.S. livestock cooperatives.

The recent consolidation with Midwest Livestock Producers provides further evidence of meaningful coordination and improvements in marketing. Leadership has not only been evidenced in the Badger state but also in the National Livestock Producers Association and other industry groups.

Taken together, these leadership roles demonstrate the value of cooperation in improving the economic well-being of livestock producers and their local associations.

Sincerely,

Randall E. Torgerson  
Deputy Administrator



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## THE HISTORICAL SETTING

### *A Cattle Producer's Morning*

**O**n a warm fall morning, a south central Wisconsin agriculturalist loaded several cattle up a ramp and into a livestock trailer. Starting the pickup truck, he began the journey down the asphalt road to State Highway 11.

About 20 minutes later, he slowly veered into Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association's lot in Monroe. As a member and owner of this cooperative, he benefits by marketing livestock through this organization.

He paid little attention to the path traveled. What he had crossed on his familiar route was a history of determination and hard work by agricultural producers who had gone before him. He entered an arena where dedicated agriculturalists have labored diligently for 75 years to establish a method of organizing fair livestock sales for all. This is their success story.

### *The Terminal Market and the Private Treaty Days*

Early in the 20th century, livestock producers toiled in a highly centralized industry, molded by the rise of the great Chicago Stockyards. Here slaughterhouses and packinghouses served as the "terminal market" for livestock producers; the place where their cattle would be brought and sold.

In Wisconsin, livestock producers utilized the terminal markets in Milwaukee, Green Bay and the "Twin Cities". Sales were conducted through "private treaty."

The private treaty transactions typically would involve an individual producer and a buyer from a packinghouse. Sometimes several producers would collectively bring their livestock to market to reduce transportation costs.

Roy Jones, a retired 46-year veteran of Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association, described the private treaty activities as follows:

*"There were a number of concentration points where farmers gathered livestock together; a packer would come in and negotiate with the manager on price -- that's called private treaty."*

*"It's the same at the terminal market where the salesman and the packer buyer go into a pen of livestock; the producer would say, 'Well, there are six cows in this pen I want \$13 a hundred for three of them, \$12 a hundred for two and \$10 a hundred for one.' Then they would give their price to the buyer, who would look at it (naturally they'd want to negotiate). So the buyer would say, 'Well, I'll take off a dollar here and maybe a half a dollar there and that's my bid.'"*

*"If there were other buyers in the area or in the market that wanted to bid, they had the right to bid on them too, but they would do the same thing and that's what's called private treaty."*

The actual market consisted of few buyers, or only one, and the producers were at the mercy of the situation. They had the choice to take their cattle elsewhere, but realistically that was difficult and time-consuming for the hard-working producers.



The system worked for the most part, until the days following World War I. The war had brought a false bonanza of inflated prices and food buying from food-starved and war-ravaged Europe. But with war's end, the need for American food declined as the warring nations reestablished their own food production. As a result, the American farm industry was cast into a deep depression; livestock sold for well below what farmers had paid to raise them. In Chicago, cattle and hog prices declined by 50 percent in two years. Amidst this apparent crisis, farm producers developed a way to survive and flourish.

In order to unite their voices and share in economies of scale from working together, agricultural producers formed

cooperatives and local shipping associations.

What the farmers desperately needed was an improved way to market their livestock that would result in a better price for their product.

In December of 1921, the National Livestock Producers Association was founded in Chicago, *"...to promote the general welfare of livestock producers, and provide better and more economical methods of marketing and buying livestock..."*

The packers did not immediately embrace the national organization. In fact, they spent several years preventing the organization's expansion through a legal challenge.

But the Capper Volstead Act of 1922 supported the farmers by exempting their cooperatives from antitrust law restrictions that





### *The Equity Logo*

The first logo which appeared on the *Equity News* and publications featured the motto, "The Farmers' Preference, Our Best Reference." This motto evolved through a 1935 high school competition. Over 150 students submitted ideas, with Antigo FFA member George Goodwill coming up with the prize winning phrase which won him a war bond.

The insignia was completed by showing an old balance centered in a circle with the motto lettered around the perimeter. After awhile, a cattle head was centered behind the balance with the circle and motto as before.

After Peter May joined the staff to do public relations he worked hard to design a new logo. Using the same motto he changed the head of the animal to a script "Equity" which set on a slant behind the scale. This new logo was used for a couple of years on checks, stationery and other printed material. In 1958 a block letter "Equity" was placed behind the balance, and the circle and motto were eliminated. This design was well liked and continued to represent Equity until the management team and board decided it needed a more modernized look. This brings us to the presently used logo which was approved by the board in 1980.

policed "price fixing" in many other industries. The National Livestock Producers Association, originally serving producers in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, had paved the way for Wisconsin farmers to join in a similar task.

The stage was now set for one of the most successful cooperative marketing ventures of the 20th century.

## **EQUITY – AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAD COME**

### *Equity's Birth*

During the early 1920s, The American Society of Equity was formed in the upper Mississippi River communities to help producers and their local shipping associations get livestock to market in Minnesota's "Twin Cities". Nearby Wisconsin farmers joined the association as word of the organization's positive impact spread throughout the state. The Minneapolis-based American Society of Equity assisted Wisconsin producers in drawing up the framework for their own association; one that would meet producers' needs in the Milwaukee terminal markets.

In March of 1922, representatives from 44 local Wisconsin shipping associations gathered in Milwaukee to form a cooperative venture similar to the National Livestock Producers Association.

As a result of their collective efforts, Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association was established on March 20, and formally incorporated in Wisconsin on August 26, 1922. The original five member Board of Directors was comprised of J. J. Lamb of Fond du lac, who served as the first president, Henry Glock of Weyauwega, Ben Lang of Marshfield, Harvey Fargo of Mt. Horeb, and G. A. Fisher of Fond du lac. The establishment of Equity brought strength through local shipping associations banding together into a larger, more powerful entity.

Equity's founders stated the organization's mission:

*"Equity's major purpose is to render those vital marketing services that livestock producers cannot achieve as individuals working alone."*

Initial stockholders were (and still are today) the local shipping associations.

At that time, the primary method of moving cattle to market was by rail. As the decade of the 1920s wore on, trucking livestock became more popular. Over the next two decades, rail-based local shipping associations were outnumbered by truck-based shipping associations and they began to merge.

At first, marketing livestock was conducted by members of the association's officers. However this proved unrealistic, so Equity hired W. E. Hearst to conduct marketing operations. His friendly manner and competent work style attracted many followers. Yet,



Equity's producer-members realized their cooperative was lacking two important ingredients to reach the next stage of success.

One was the need to address the producers' growing desire to develop local markets. The other was for a dynamic, visionary leader who would not only assist the board in guiding the membership through the difficulties of the Depression, but also help them chart a clear direction for the future.

Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association attained both in the 1930s. The results have forever changed Wisconsin's livestock marketing structure.

## EQUITY GETS PLACED "ON THE MAP"

### *The Cooperative Strengthens Operations*

For the first 10 years of the organization's existence, Equity served a small, but loyal group of producers who worked with W. E. Hearst to bring livestock to Milwaukee.

Assembling cattle at remote locations, transporting them by rail or truck, feeding and caring for them during the long ride and at the terminal markets was taxing and costly. When W. E. Hearst's health failed in the early 1930s, he could no longer perform these tasks. The Board of Directors realized that bold, decisive steps were needed to approach livestock marketing and they began a search for someone to lead them.

Charles Foster Claflin, best known as "Claf", was a Mondovi, Wisconsin native. Born and raised on a farm, he was a vocational agriculture teacher. He also doubled as a Wisconsin Department of Agriculture livestock marketing specialist when Equity's Board interviewed him in 1934.

Charles Claflin was the perfect fit to be the first general manager of Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association. Taking his cue from the Board, Claf immediately set out to not only transform Equity into a strong livestock marketing cooperative, but the most successful in the state. In the 29 years of Claf's stewardship, he helped the Equity Board and all the association's producer-members surpass that lofty goal.

Charles Claflin began by choosing his management team, Ray Steidl signed on to be Claf's assistant general manager for the next 29 years. Next, Claf signed up Art Magnus as cattle salesman, Joe Long as hog salesman, and Tom Kewley as calf and sheep salesman. All four of these men were hired away from the Chicago terminal market



*Charles Claflin*

and worked together for the next several decades.

Since Equity's terminal market was in Milwaukee, the Board authorized Charles Claflin and his team to establish there. In 1936, the headquarters building was purchased at 100 North Muskego, where it remained for 30 years.

Next, Claf established a simple organizational newsletter to communicate to the cooperative's members. The purpose was to promote open and regular communications; reminding producers of the critical importance of working together to achieve bargaining power. He regularly warned them against private treaty sales in what he gently termed "selling in the country."

The process of organizational private treaty marketing continued to present problems and the membership continued to struggle with the distance and logistics of getting their livestock to the Milwaukee terminal market.

James Koenecke, a longtime Reedsburg producer and Equity Rich Land Shipping Association board member, recalls the complex procedure required in getting livestock to market:

*"When we started, we had a shipping association in Reedsburg which served farmers from Reedsburg, Loganville, Rock Springs, La Valle, Ironton, Cazenovia as well as livestock from Ellsworth."*

*"We had hired a qualified farmer who was capable of handling the livestock and he worked at the local market one day a week. We took our livestock into Reedsburg on a Wednesday morning, and used the Chicago and Northwestern railroad."*

*"We also had a little branch market in Rock Springs in the early days, and they would pick up the livestock and bring it into Reedsburg."*

*"Taking in stock all day, they loaded the livestock in railroad cars. The livestock usually arrived in Milwaukee about 6:00 in the morning and a livestock manager rode along...in the caboose to supervise the unloading and loading at Milwaukee."*

*"Then it was turned over to our commission firm and the cattle were fed and watered after they arrived in Milwaukee and then weighed. The commission firm representative would negotiate with a buyer for the price*



Art Magnus and Jim Grace



Art Magnus

*on the cattle. Every farmer took his own shrink and own price on the cattle. On hogs, as I recall, we had a standard shrink of seven pounds per animal."*

Ultimately, road improvements in the state made shipping by truck increasingly popular, and by the late 1930s, rail shipment to the huge terminal markets was not as exclusive as it had once been.

The seeds were sewn for decentralization of the packing industry and producers were motivated.

The Board of Directors, together with Charles Claflin and his management team, seized the opportunity to propel Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association into a beneficial future.



*Equity's Milwaukee office*



*1935 - Equity office staff in Milwaukee Stockyards building*





## The Equity Newsletter

The period from 1934 to 1960 was rich with important market activity and cooperative leadership. During that time, an important step for Equity was developing a means to communicate effectively to all members.

An Equity "newsletter" to the membership was started in 1935 as a mimeographed two page letter. This was used to thank shippers for their support as well as report Equity's positive accomplishments. After two years the newsletter began to use professional typesetting

and photography. Each issue carried a letter from Mr. Claflin emphasizing the importance of working together to achieve overall bargaining power. At that time Equity felt the need to help shippers realize that "selling in the country" was very poor marketing, a procedure helping the buyers instead of the farmers.

The newsletter grew in importance and carried special features provided by the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture. In 1944 it was enlarged to eight pages and carried progress reports, legislative news, special features, and market outlook. Agricultural libraries in Germany, China, and other countries asked to be placed on the mailing list.

The end result was the power that comes from knowledge -- in this case the knowledge of how cooperative marketing practices can consistently benefit all producers within the organizations.

Again, Equity's membership had found a vehicle to build upon their cumulative success.

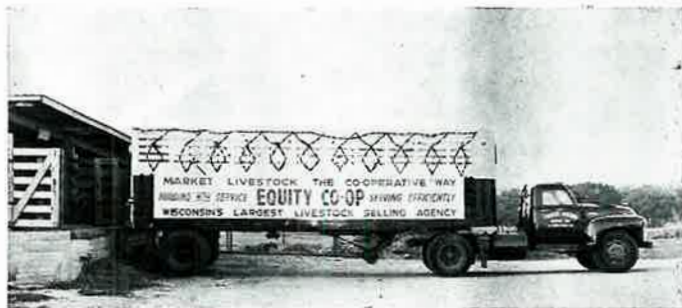


Vol. 15, No. 9

Published by the Equity Co-operative Livestock Sales Ass'n.

November, 1950

### EQUITY PARTICIPATES AT CHEESE DAY AT MONROE.



This shows one of the trucks of French Trucking, Monroe, Wisconsin decorated for the annual cheese day at Monroe, which attracted more than 50,000 people. French Trucking do the hauling to different packers out of the Equity Market at Monroe. (See inside story.)

## DECENTRALIZATION

### *Exciting Opportunities*

Even before World War II, the producers realized that trucking livestock would make a significant change in marketing and, provided there were closer markets, they would no longer need to haul livestock all the way to Milwaukee.

The Equity Board urged Charles Claflin to explore some new marketing possibilities. He seized upon an opportunity when two meat packers in Green Bay were expanding business and looking for a steady livestock supply from northeastern Wisconsin. Claf suggested Equity place a representative in the packers' "alleys" in Green Bay. Although the packers did not like the idea, when Equity's board threatened to instruct producers to ship all livestock to Milwaukee, the packers agreed to allow Equity at their sales.



*Equity's second logo*

### *Problems with the Milwaukee Stockyards*

When Milwaukee Stockyards' President Joe McGilvray got wind of Claf's plan for local Equity sales in Green Bay, he issued an order refusing Equity access to the Milwaukee yards.

Equity's Board demanded a hearing. When the Milwaukee Federal Building was packed with Wisconsin farmers clamoring to access the hearing room, the Milwaukee Stockyards comprehended Equity's strength in a positive, united membership. Immediately they canceled the hearing and reinstated Equity's yard privileges.

Equity's producer-members won a big victory - the right to establish local markets.

Equity's first branch market in Green Bay opened in 1936, and Claf hired former county agent R. H. Walton to manage the operation. From the start, the Green Bay branch succeeded and the cooperative's



*The Green Bay Feeder Yards*



*Equity's Feeder Farm in Pewaukee*

efforts flourished.

Further expansion moved slowly as uncertainty over farm, commodity and livestock prices made many producers reluctant to consider rapid growth.

In 1937, the increased operational volume resulted in expanded office space in the Milwaukee headquarters.

As an experiment, Equity purchased a farm near Pewaukee in 1941 to receive, handle, condition if necessary, and sort feeder cattle, lambs and sheep. This venture was a beneficial learning experience, but dramatic changes in marketing procedures and the added pressures of World War II brought the Board to a decision to sell the farm after the war. It was sold at a considerable profit.

### *Post-War Expansion*



*Peter May*

Exciting new opportunities for Equity members arose following the war, and the Board authorized Charles Claflin to step up the pace of opening new markets. In 1946, Equity established another new market at Altoona, Wisconsin, to serve producers in the northwest part of the state. Claf hired Parker Hagg, a former vocational agriculture teacher, to manage the facility of mini-stockyards.

Through the balance of the 1940s and into the 1950s, the Wisconsin Farm Bureau encouraged Equity to expand beyond what had already been done and open additional markets across the state.

In 1948 alone, new markets were established in Dodgeville, Monroe, Reedsburg and Lancaster.

These ambitious openings were followed by new markets in Ripon and Richland Center in 1949; West Salem, Boscobel and Stratford in 1952; Withee in 1954; and Vesper and Clinton in 1955.

Equity's rapid expansion prompted a decision to hire a full time public relations person to help Claf and Ray with the job of keeping the membership informed of changes made. The person to fill this job was an experienced public relations professional, Peter May, from the National Dairy Council, who was hired by Equity in 1954. He would deal with the problem of growth in the country buying stations being set up by the packers. Pete remained with Equity for 25 years, retiring in October of 1979.

Taking leadership pointers from the National Livestock Producers Association, which Equity joined in 1942, the organization became "a state federation of cooperatives within a national federation of livestock cooperatives". With this change, Equity's membership increased their influence and developed an ability to affect national policy.



## *Reassessment*

The rapid expansion in the number of Equity branch markets in the late 1940s and mid-50s created a bookkeeping and paperwork challenge for Equity's office staff.

Supervision and management of the various branches was very labor-intensive and the costs associated with the expansion were considerable.

The association's membership called upon Charles Claflin and Ray Steidl together with Equity board members to create a solution. Together they came up with an idea in 1956 which perpetually revolutionized the way Wisconsin livestock producers and packing house buyers would work together.

The result was a system which brings pride of accomplishment to Equity members across the state and a sense of permanence in their efforts.



*Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association Banquet at Hotel Pfister, Milwaukee. January 29, 1942*

# THE LIVESTOCK AUCTION COMES TO EQUITY



Calves hardly had time to get their feet firmly under them in the auction ring at Richland Center, Wis., Monday. As many as three calves a minute were sold under the hammer of auctioneer Roy Jones (upper, right). Lower: Em Buelow and his son, Eldor, of La Valle, Wis., were among the many farmers who attended. They sold one calf f

## *A Tough Decision*

During 1956, the Equity board and staff, as well as representatives from local shipping associations, discussed the possibility of moving from private treaty sales to auction markets. Many meetings were held, and at times, discussions were wide-ranging and the challenges facing the members substantial.

But Equity quickly moved ahead when the Richland Center, Wisconsin City Council passed an ordinance prohibiting livestock markets in the city. Equity's market had been in operation there since 1949 and its existence at the railroad yards was threatened by the ordinance.

Equity's Board turned this situation into an opportunity to test the auction market on an experimental basis. In August 1956, Equity purchased three acres of land southeast of Richland Center to build and open its first auction market. The move drew considerable attention across the state.

In December of 1956, the Equity Board sent Roy Jones, a member of the board since 1950, to auction school. Roy remembers those exciting days:

*"In 1957 I went to work for Equity as an auctioneer; it was policy that an employee was not to serve on the Board so I relinquished that responsibility and continued to proceed in the auction business. We started the livestock auction at Richland Center on April 15, 1957 and I was the first auctioneer to sell livestock for Equity."*

April was truly revolutionary. The new facility opened, and a large crowd of curious farmers showed up, as did Equity's entire board. Dealers and packers were there, and by day's end, the inaugural Equity livestock auction was a smashing success. The

top calves sold for more than they had all year in Milwaukee.

Following that success, the Equity board members voted to shift all locations to auction markets as quickly as possible.

The transition pace included opening auction markets at Altoona in 1957, Bonduel and Reedsville in 1958, Sparta in 1959, and Johnson Creek in 1960.

With the change to auc-



Opening day at Richland Center, Equity's first auction market. April 15, 1957.



*USDA scale testing in the late 1950s*

tion markets, Equity closed the older markets at Vesper in 1957, Green Bay and Withee in 1958 (Green Bay would be served by the new branch market at Bonduel). The Monroe, Dodgeville, Lancaster, and Boscobel terminal markets were closed in 1959. (Monroe would eventually see a very successful auction market when it was reestablished in 1976.)

The transition to auction markets posed unique challenges for the Green Bay district. Equity didn't have a good market location because the Fox River terminated at the city of Green Bay and there was no place to build within the city.

The decision considered which side of the river to build the market. Quickly, several communities proposed they should have the market. On the west side of the river a group of Outagamie County producers and residents campaigned to locate the market at Shiocton, not far from New London. The associations in the northern part of the district preferred Bonduel, not far from Shawano.

Delegates from 42 shipping associations met at Seymour's City Hall on March 29, 1958 where Mr. Claflin, Board President Neal Peck, and the advocates for the two main location possibilities presented their proposals. Mr. Claflin asked that all delegates give their full support to whichever location won the vote.

The Bonduel location was chosen and immediately plans were made to purchase property and build there. Each association agreed to set up a finance committee to solicit shares of Equity preferred stock to raise as much money as possible because there was a limit to what Equity could borrow from the bank for cooperatives.

On the East side of the Fox River, Reedsville won the market.

These associations also set out to sell stock to raise money for their market. The village of Reedsville had space available, thus the market location was settled. Equity then bought the lots on the near north side of the village.



*Lowell Olson running the scales at the Altoona Market in 1958*

With excellent cooperation on all construction matters both the Bonduel and Reedsville markets were built without any delays, and both opened for business in October 1958.

As Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association entered the 1960s, it had established itself as the prominent sales cooperative in the state, while changing the livestock marketing business.

The future vision of livestock marketing was the result of the members' courageous risk-taking. The dynamic Board and management team exhibited leadership, resulting in improved marketing procedures for all members.



*Equity's 3rd logo*



*Auctioneers*



*Equity's Bonduel Market, 1960*



*Altoona*



*Equity's Reedsville Market, 1958*



*Equity's Johnson Creek Market  
opened October 10, 1960*



*Equity's Board of Directors,  
1959. Back, left to right: C.F.  
Claflin, Mgr. Milwaukee; Guy  
Dilbie, Otto Johnson, Glen  
Hacker. Seated, left to right:  
Neal Peck, Vice President; John  
Maier, President; Lynn  
Merow, Secretary.*



*Equity's Sparta Market*



*Opening of Equity's Sparta Market in 1965.  
Left to right: R. G. Hvam, Governor Knowles, and Sparta's Mayor*



*Equity's Stratford Market*



*Sparta Open House*



*Left: Equity's Coon Valley Market, formerly Nerison's, served producers around Vernon County.*

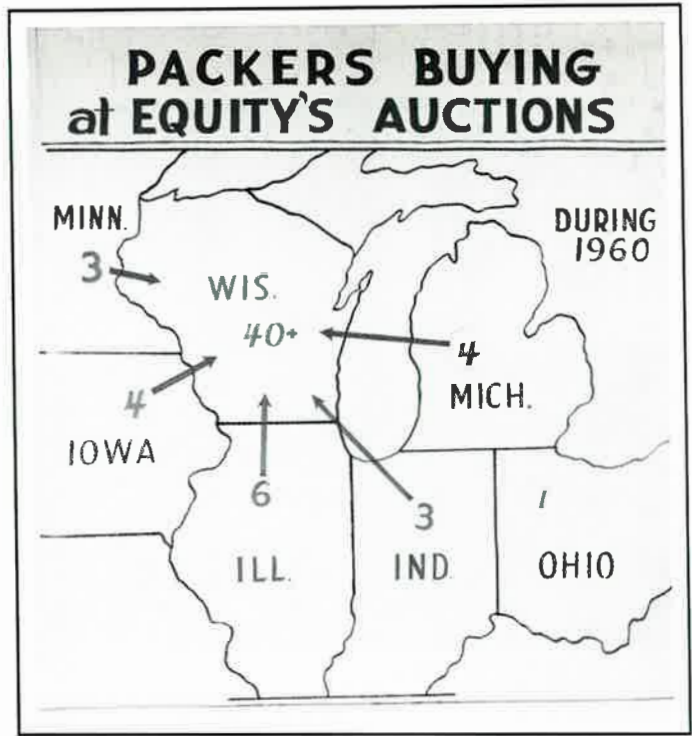
*Center: Opening of Coon Valley Auction Market, 1960s.*

*Bottom: Ripon Market.*





Roger Robson at Farm Progress Days



## EQUITY'S LIVESTOCK MARKETING

### *Equity's Lamb Pool*

Equity's Board encouraged the management team to chart a new opportunity for the membership as the cooperative expanded the Lamb Pool operations. First started in the 1950s, Equity was operating nine lamb pool markets by 1974. This healthy statewide market for both lamb and sheep producers existed because of Equity's efforts.

Dr. Art Pope, lamb specialist at the University of Wisconsin and one of the people who helped "Claf" organize the first lamb pool in 1954, wrote a guest editorial for Equity's newsletter in 1974 responding to the success of the lamb pool since its start:

*"As we approach the 20th anniversary of Equity's Lamb Pool system of marketing, it is difficult to guess where Wisconsin sheep producers would be without it. This system has operated most successfully during the past twenty years and under difficult circumstances.*

*"Twenty years ago there were packer lamb killers in Madison, Milwaukee, Eau Claire, and Cudahy, plus several just over the state line. Previous to 1954, Wisconsin lamb marketing operations had been primarily an individual farmer activity. No lamb market system existed whereby sheep producers could readily pool their lamb crop for marketing in volume, as their lamb crops reached market weight and condition.*

*Today (1974), there are nine lamb pool locations operated by Equity personnel and a total of 109 pool days are held at these locations each year."*

*"The contributions that these pools have made and the volume of sheep handled annually clearly indicates their success. It is an excellent example of what cooperation can do when a marketing cooperative and personnel from the Department of Agriculture, vo-ag departments, and University Extension all pull together to provide a better service."*

At the time Dr. Pope wrote his editorial there were no longer any packers slaughtering lambs in Wisconsin. Lamb market prices became very weak before and after the lamb program was started, indeed sheep producers would have been in a very poor bargaining position without the lamb pools, where sheep could be





*Les Leonard and Pete May discussing use of LFM Teletype information in preparing market data for market managers and public.*

pooled together in large enough loads to move them out of state.

Tom Kewley, Equity's first lamb grader, graded the receipts at the first lamb pool in Ripon and at following pools the first year. After that, Equity used a number of graders including Quinn Kolb, Stan Langholff, and Harold LeJeune.

In 1956 Maurice Moyer came to Equity from Ohio where he had been a lamb grader for more than ten years. He and Harold LeJeune worked together for the 1963 season, after that Harold left Equity. Maurice continued to manage the lamb pools for Equity until he retired in 1982.

Scott Anderson came to Equity in 1980, during which time the pool program was enlarged to include producers outside Wisconsin. By 1983 the pool operation was called the "Corn Belt Lamb" electronic market and was selling lambs for producers in seven Midwest states, and Scott was given the position of lamb division manager.

The lamb pool operation had grown from 20,000 annual lamb volume to over 100,000; this while there was a constant decrease in available sheep and lamb

numbers. This was a cooperative service program that required a minimum investment in facilities and personnel compared to the impact it had on the lamb marketing operations.

In 1982 the Corn Belt Lamb tele-auction added some new equipment in their computerized system. This involved a screen on the buyer's terminal that showed the data describing the lot of lambs that would be auctioned next in the sale order. This addition to the computer was to speed up the sale by eliminating the buyer's need to catch all the information as to the number, weight, grade, and other important facts about the lamb lots to be offered for next sale on the phone. These improvements in the lamb marketing equipment helped the operation grow to a volume of 117,000 head in 1982; an increase of nearly 41,000 over the first year that the electronic system was used.

## *Special Sales for Feeder Cattle*

The first special feeder cattle auction sale conducted by Equity was held December 1957, at the Richland Center market. Since that time, feeder cattle sales have been of growing interest until, after 25 years, most of Equity's markets hold one or more such sales on a special sale day or setting one day a week as a feeder cattle sale day.

Early in Equity's history it was customary for Wisconsin cattle feeders to buy cattle in the west and have them shipped to Wisconsin in October. This was why the cooperative bought the feeder farm in Pewaukee. For a number of years Claf would travel out to Montana to look at and order feeder cattle to supply the needs of Wisconsin livestock feeders. The feeder farm also handled lambs and a few horses.

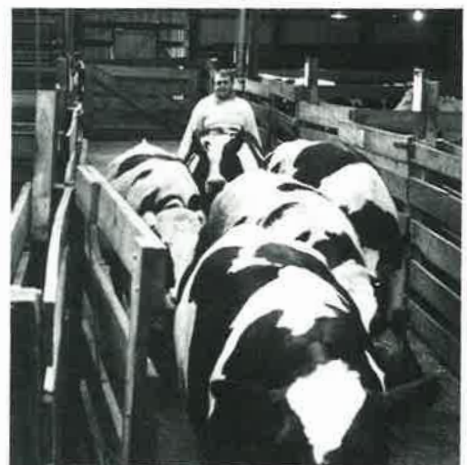
This situation changed after some years due to the changes in Wisconsin's agriculture and cattle marketing habits. The feeder farm was sold in the late 1950's at the time the auction markets got the feeder cattle auctions underway.

At first, feeder cattle demand was strictly for the beef breeds. As interest in "dairy beef" grew, so did the idea that Holsteins produced good beef as well as milk. The fast food chains used this beef in great quantities. At first, feeder sale committees were reluctant to admit dairy-bred or even crossbred cattle in the feeder sales. As demand for the Holsteins grew, attitudes, of course, changed.

In 1978 the nine Equity markets planned and conducted 23 special feeder cattle sales including several for club calves that were co-sponsored by other cooperative livestock groups. Over the years special feeder cattle sales became firmly established.



*Charles Clafin on a visit to Montana looking for cattle for the Pewaukee Feeder Farm.*



*A load of holstein steers being sorted before the auction.*

## *Dairy Cattle Marketing*



Quality is a special factor which makes dairy cattle different from other classes of livestock. Since Wisconsin is "America's Dairyland," milk production is an added factor in quality that every animal must have before sale as a dairy cow.

Each buyer is an individual with a critical eye. He or she is slow to invest money until they believe the dairy cow has what they want to buy. Milk production records and potential are first. Good health, size, confirmation, and temperament come next.

Equity put a great deal of time and effort into marketing dairy cattle after converting the market to auctions. The first campaigns, starting in 1962, were set up to recognize these special quality factors in the animals.

Equity started the "blue tag calf" program in cooperation with the herd improvement associations and breeding co-ops. The plan was to simply grade each calf for its genetics and other desirable traits. The superior select calves would be given a blue tag as identification when offered for sale. The dealers resisted this program.

The next effort to help Wisconsin improve the market for quality dairy cattle was the "graded dairy heifer" program. In this the state sets up standards a heifer had to meet to qualify for one of the sale categories from fancy, select, desirable, utility, and undesirable.

At first, such sales at Bonduel had 400 heifers. 21st Century Genetics and the Shawano County Dairy Herd Improvement Association worked with Equity, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, and extension dairy producers in arranging the sale. It attracted a fine crowd of interested buyers who paid good prices for the heifers. Most people thought this was going to be the dairy marketing program of the future, but again dairy cattle dealers rejected it.

Since both of the attempts to sell Wisconsin dairy calves and heifers in a graded manner were defeated by the dairy cattle dealers, Equity tried providing a service for dairy producers needing replacement cattle.

It was clear that a good dairy cattle dealer with many friends in the dairy business and a broad acquaintance with the herds in the area had a great advantage and a minimum cash outlay since he didn't actually have to buy an inventory of cattle to do business.

In the 1970's Equity scheduled special dairy sales on a certain day of the week at different markets when people with dairy cows to sell could offer them at a special dairy sale. This program seemed to provide a service the market appreciated. Consequently several of Equity's branch markets continue to keep these schedules in operation.

## *Emphasis on Hogs Increases*

Hogs have always been included in Equity's livestock marketing services. For the first several decades of operation this was just for market hogs. Even when the conversion to auction sales took place in the late 1950's very little effort went into feeder pig marketing. That was due to the organizing in 1956 of the Wisconsin Feeder Pig Marketing Cooperative which Equity recognized as the proper organization to handle feeder pigs because of the importance of quality control under contracts they used.

After years of respecting this reservation and later developing the belief that feeder pig grading at the time of sale would do more to improve quality of the market hogs than the use of contracts, Equity developed its graded feeder pig auctions program.

The Ripon market had for years been one of Equity's main hog markets, along with the Sparta market and its satellite, West Salem. In 1979 Phil Ziegler joined Equity as the feeder pig grader. The

Ripon branch then started selling feeder pigs at graded auction sales. This sale used the telephone to provide more possible buyers during the sales. These sales soon became popular at Ripon, Altoona, Johnson Creek, Reedsville, Monroe, Bonduel, Sparta, and Stratford.

In 1982 Equity entered into a joint venture with the American Feeder Pig Cooperative. Following this move Equity added two more operating points, one at Blue Mounds and the other at Lancaster. With the already operating new Equity hog market at Arlington, Equity brought Dick Zuelke in to coordinate the hog marketing program and work with Bill Geary in expanding the forward pricing sales contracts operation.

Ed Sandstrom, Sr., formerly a hog buyer for Oscar Mayer, was hired in 1981 to manage the new hog market in Arlington. In 1983 this market added new barn facilities to handle feeder pigs as well as market hogs. Equity was then preparing to use the telephone and computer system to market hogs through the electronic system similar to the lamb marketing system.

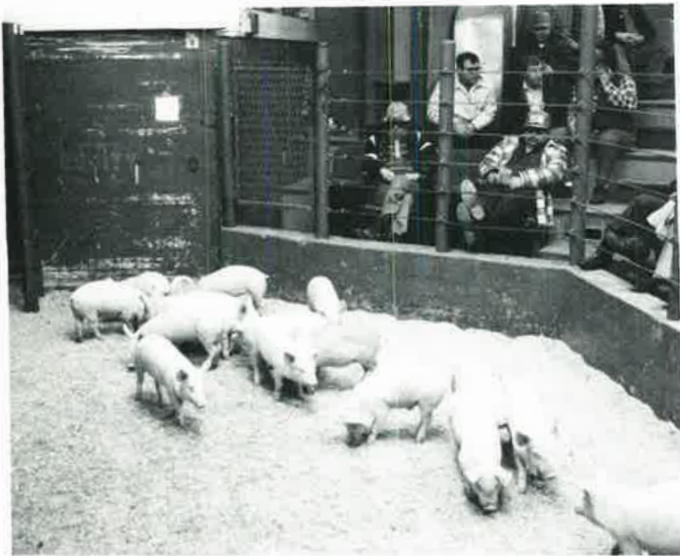


*Spring Market Hog Show*





*A rarity - a January 21, 1977 buffalo auction.  
Roy Jones with the cane and Bill Stade, auctioneer.*



*Feeder Pigs*



*Albert Harg with horned Hereford steers*



*Group of new crop lambs waiting to be loaded and shipped  
to Equity.*



*Charles Foster Claflin*

## A TIME OF TRANSITION

### *A Tragedy for Equity*

In 1963, Equity's management team changed quickly and unexpectedly. In February, Ray Steidl passed away. He had been on board since 1934 as Claf's loyal assistant. Following Ray's death, Claf grew increasingly dependent upon Russell Hvam while the board searched for Ray's successor.

But more tragedy arose. On May 1, 1963, Claf visited the Ripon market and then stayed overnight in Lake Delton to prepare for a visit to the Richland Center market the next day.

Unfortunately, he never made it. He suffered a fatal heart attack at the motel, ending his 29-year career with Equity. Charles Foster Claflin had built a strong viable organization which needed a new leader.

The membership turned to Russell G. Hvam.

### *Transition*

Immediately after Claf passed away, Russell ran the organization until a permanent team could be named. The board moved swiftly. Board chair John Maier called an emergency meeting, at which Russell Hvam was named the second general manager of Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association. Also, Peter May became assistant general manager, and John D. Jenks was named controller, filling Russ Hvam's newly vacated spot.

Russell G. Hvam grew up in Stoughton, Wisconsin, and received his accounting degree at the University of Wisconsin. He spent several years working for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture as chief auditor of cooperatives. His experience working with local association bookkeeping and tax records prepared him for Equity's financial responsibilities.

Russ Hvam had joined the Equity management team in 1943. During the period of branch expansion and auction market development, he managed all accounting procedures for Equity's operations.

When Claf had his first heart attack, Russ took over all office management operations and Ray Steidl spent considerable time overseeing the organization's services.

When Russ Hvam became Equity's general manager, the Board authorized him to establish financial safeguards in order to insure funds were always available and correctly supervised, while following regulations by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Russell Hvam had inherited the leadership of an organization



*Russell Hvam and John Jenks*

which had experienced dynamic growth in a fairly short time. He was forced to contend with changes in the marketplace as well as technological innovations which would change the nature of the agricultural business.

Among the changes to come would be the eventual closing of the Milwaukee terminal market, the need for a centrally located headquarters, as well as a need to examine and consolidate the existing markets into an even more streamlined operation.

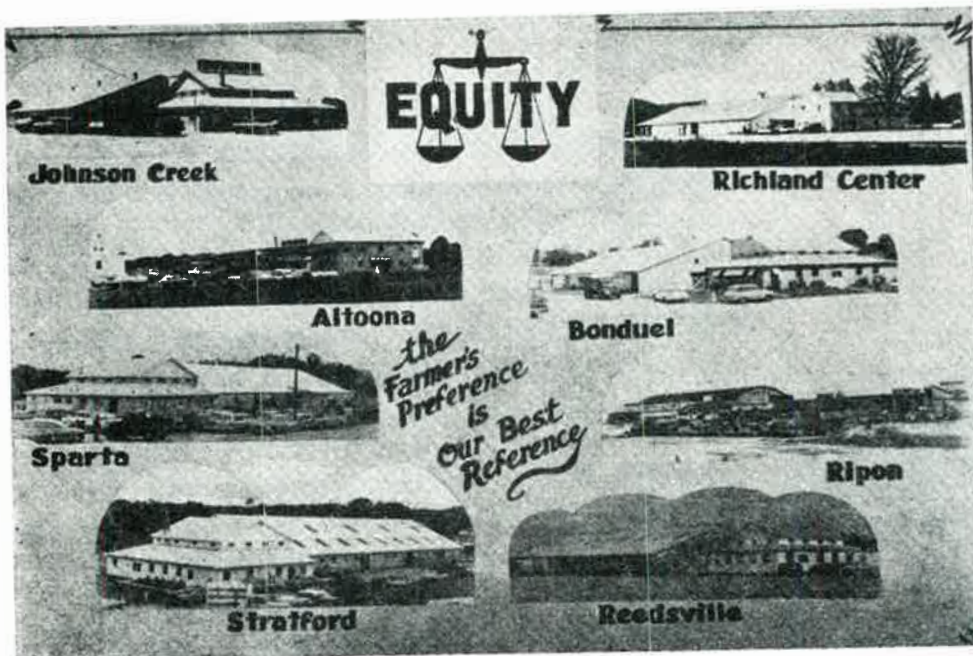
During the next nine years, Russell Hvam tackled the challenge; the results benefitted all producer members of Equity.

# THIS IS EQUITY

its services \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ its program \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ its record



1922

in its 41st year

1963

**Equity Co-operative Livestock Sales Association**

Main Office — 100 N. Muskego, Milwaukee, Wis.

"WISCONSIN'S MOST PROGRESSIVE LIVESTOCK SELLING AGENCY"

# EQUITY MOVES TO BARABOO

## *The Times Had Changed*

By the mid 1960s, the great terminal market stockyards were in significant decline. The granddaddy of them all, the great Chicago Union Stockyards, had fallen on bad times and would vanish in 1971.

Milwaukee was also experiencing hard times; once the center of livestock operations. Milwaukee was the only place Equity producers had sent their livestock for the first 14 years. Even then, there were no other branches until after World War II.

When Russell Hvam took over as general manager, he presided over a membership that blanketed the state of Wisconsin.

Each year's annual meeting brought observations from delegates and members alike - Milwaukee was no longer the center of marketing, and it was just too far away.

In 1964, Equity's leadership decided to move the headquarters to a more central location. The new location would be Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The move took place between Christmas 1965 and New Year's Day of 1966. The new facility was a two-story office building at 612 South Boulevard in Baraboo. As soon as Equity Cooperative



*Erv Powers and John Jenks discuss an IBM printout in 1964 in Milwaukee.*

Livestock Sales Association set up business in the new headquarters, Equity's board authorized the conversion of record keeping to a new, state-of-the-art IBM computer system.

At the time of the move, the last of Charles Claflin's original team, Tom Kewley, elected to retire. So as Equity moved to Baraboo it was completely guided by the second generation of leadership: Pete May, John Jenks, Charles Fisher, and Gene Murray. Joining the new directors team were area residents Maurice Moyer and Stanley Langholff.



*Moving vans line up for transfer from Equity's office in Milwaukee to Baraboo*



*Equity's first office at Baraboo, from 1965 to 1966*



*Equity's 4th logo*



*Russell Hvam*

## *Bringing Together Three Cooperatives*

At the same time Equity moved to Baraboo, two other cooperatives, Tri-State Breeders and Wisconsin Dairies, were looking to move from poorly-located cramped quarters in other sections of the state.

The three cooperatives knew that they wanted to locate their new headquarters closer to the center of the membership they served. They also wanted to be near the University of Wisconsin and the legislature when they had interest in monitoring the laws affecting their members. All three associations were involved in some part of the dairy industry. Tri-State Breeders who had outgrown the office at Westby; the new Wisconsin Dairies, which had just been created when the dairy processing cooperatives at Union Center, Sauk City, Reedsburg, and Richland Center consolidated into one large organization, were cramped, trying to run their operations out of the Union Center milk plant.

Russ Hvam knew Floyd Harris, manager of Wisconsin Dairies, and Neilus Larson, manager of Tri-State Breeders. At informal meetings these men met and expressed their concerns over their similar concerns. It wasn't long before someone gave the idea of combining services into one building for the sake of combined data processing. It appears Equity was the only cooperative that had installed an IBM 204 up to that time. The other organizations were ready to computerize their operations.

A retired management consultant from a firm in New York offered his services to the three cooperatives on a daily fee basis. They agreed that he might be able to help them solve their problems and a joint meeting was arranged at a motel conference room near Lake Delton.

As the consultant reviewed the three cooperatives and their problems he expressed confidence that they could really work together. He recommended they form a subsidiary cooperative and build a facility providing space for all three offices. Each cooperative could rent space from the subsidiary, saving money. When the matter of data processing was discussed it was recommended a large enough computer be installed in the new building to provide data processing for each of the cooperatives under arrangements made by the subsidiary manager.

In 1968 the plan became reality. A temporary board made up of the general manager, the board president, and the chief financial officer of each of the three cooperatives was set up to work out the details. As a result, a new headquarters building, called the "Cooperative Service Center," housing Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association, Tri-State Breeders and Wisconsin Dairies was built between Baraboo and Lake Delton on U. S. Highway 12, just across from the Baraboo-Dells airport.

The building served all three organizations through 1979, when Wisconsin Dairies had grown to the point where they required larger

facilities and built their own headquarters across the road. The building currently serves as the offices for Equity and Accelerated Genetics (Tri-State Breeders until 1995).

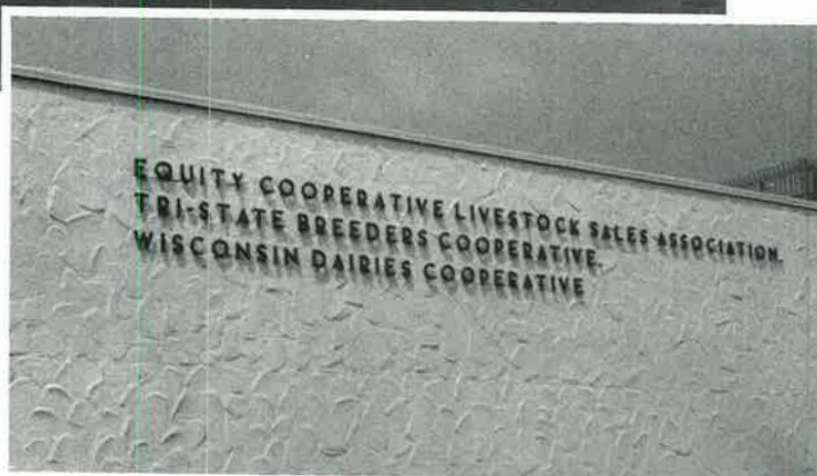
### *The Growth of Market Wide Associations*

About the same time as the move to Baraboo, Russ Hvam noticed a growing trend among local shipping associations to band together into larger units. The Ripon and Sparta shipping associations were the first to create a market-wide association. When others expressed an interest in uniting, Russ Hvam offered the services of Equity's data processing unit to help keep records.

Over the next several years, a large number of Equity's shipping associations merged together into this new market wide structure.

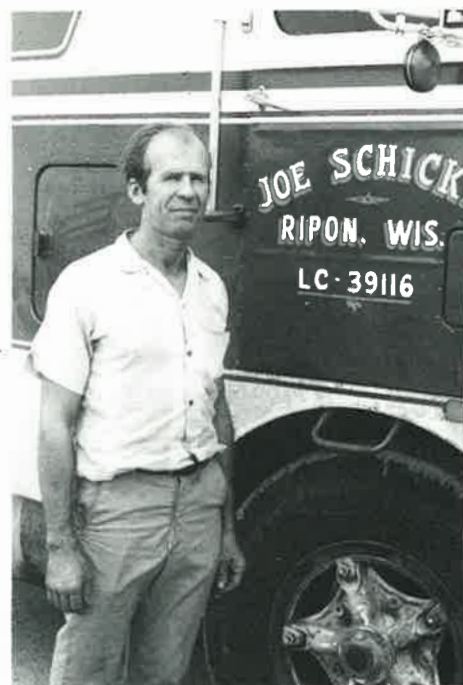


*The Cooperative Services Center at Baraboo;  
shared by Equity, Tri-State Breeders, and  
Wisconsin Dairies.*





*Johnson Creek Anniversary*



*Tod Fleming and Jeff Critser - 1989 Annual Meeting*



*Appreciation Award of Reedsville, 1987.  
Left to right: John Siegmund, Norman Labitzky and Art Kopf*



*1978 Market Managers at Sales Meeting*



*Leonard Faultersack supports Equity aboard  
his float for Gementlichkeil Days in Jefferson.*

## SPECIAL CHALLENGES FOR EQUITY'S MEMBERS

### *Financial Concerns*

Equity's rapid expansion to auction markets mirrored the establishment of the branch markets. Just as the initial expansion brought the cooperative structural and financial stresses, so did the quick movement into the auction markets.

The financial stresses became a significant concern during the 1960s, at the time of transition between Charles Claflin's administration and the new leadership of Russell Hvam.

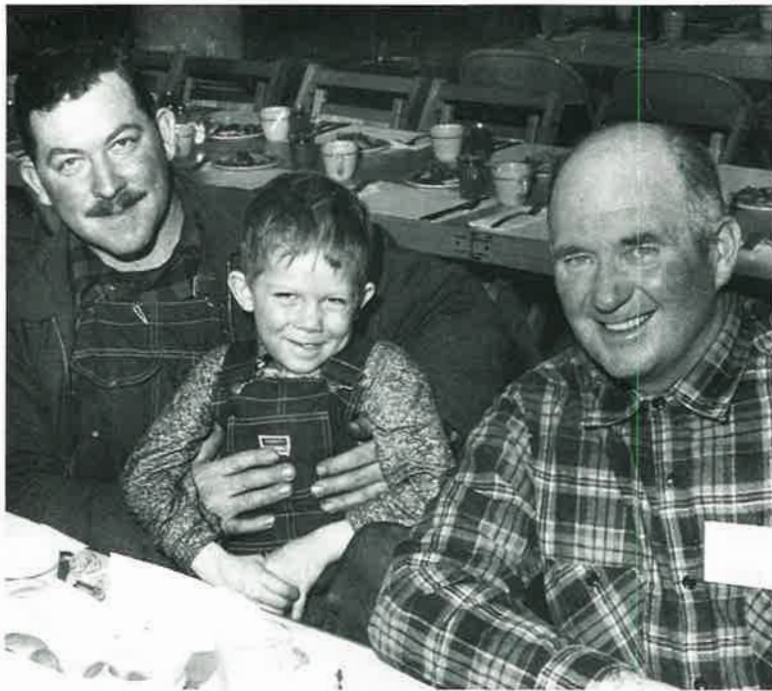


1966 Annual Meeting - Equity Resolutions Committee  
Standing, left to right: R.B. Bieri, Clarence Muello, Ed Bedona, Emmett Herold. Seated, left to right: Herman Deppe, Alvin Skagan, John Ohlinger, C.V. Goonan, Wayne Weissenberg.

The auction markets required substantial financing to build in the various locations. The existing institutional funding, as well as the need for "custodial" accounts to cover livestock purchase guarantees, encouraged Equity's board to borrow funds from the Farm Credit Administration's Bank for Cooperatives.

Lynn Merow, a 40-year veteran of the Equity region board and long-time chairman recalls the days of this unique financial picture:

*"That was back in the early 60's. It was shortly after we had built a bigger share of the auction markets - back in our growing years from terminal marketing to auction markets. We had extended ourselves beyond our means and it made it real difficult. We passed (did not declare) dividends one year and I said at the time that I wouldn't be on this Board of Directors if we ever had to pass dividends again."*



*Three generations of Equity producers at an appreciation dinner.*

*"At the time it was fortunate that we were members of the National Livestock Producers, as they were able to assist us with a few hundred thousand to carry us through one of Equity's worst times."*

The membership called upon their talented board members and management team to forge a successful financial future out of a potentially troubling situation. They did so with room to spare.

Experienced in finances, Russell Hvam set a high standard for Equity. By instituting accounting controls, and purchasing blanket insurance for any similar difficulties, Equity emerged stronger and wiser as an organization.

### *Equity and the National Farmer's Organization*

September 1964 brought tension to the agricultural industry. With low prices stretching farmers thin, the National Farmer's Organization (N.F.O.) demanded "holding auctions," asking all auction markets to close, thus attempting to force higher prices. Equity remained open for business through this period and as a result became a target for militant action.

At the Richland Center market, Equity asked the sheriff to be prepared for a mob that would try to force the market to close by refusing livestock entrance onto the property. The sheriff's presence prevented any disruptions.

At Sparta the market manager was assisted by a police chief who wasn't intimidated by the assembled protesters. The crowd saw his determination and didn't make an effort to interfere although they taunted the farmers and truckers that entered.

The worst unrest came at Bonduel on September 6, 1964. Two men were killed when run over by a truck. Fortunately NBC news cameras were present and had film of the tragedy. The N.F.O. filed suit for murder against the trucker. The NBC films were used in court and showed the unruly mob trying to tip the truck over. A policeman waved the truck on through but didn't see the two people underneath. Many people thought the mob actually pushed the rioters underneath the front wheels to force the trucker to stop.

As a result of the Bonduel incident cooler heads prevailed. Equity's volume during this period suffered somewhat at all the markets, but they all remained home for business. Some of the farmers who had voluntarily withheld their livestock, in support of



*Mike Bourke*

the N.F.O. effort to starve customers for meat, found that they couldn't keep feeding the animals as prices went down. With the resulting oversupply, this actually increased Equity's volume in the end.

### *Fire at Altoona*

The twentieth anniversary of the Altoona market in 1966 served as a proud day for Equity. At the time of Equity's first branch stockyard's anniversary the cooperative celebrated; most of Equity's markets had grown considerably, Equity had expanded facility-wise, and added new services. Altoona did suffer a serious set-back a few years later though.

During a sale in August of 1971, a period of drought when everything was extremely dry, a fire of undetermined origin destroyed the old wooden barn building and its concrete block sales arena in a very short time. The crew had only enough time to get the livestock that were close to the end of the barn out of the building.

The flames had spread into the arena so quickly that the office crew had to rush to get the sales records out of the building; many of the papers were scorched around the edges, but the animals that had been sold could all be accounted for. The Altoona fire department responded immediately and did their best to fight the great heat and wind that was generated by the fire but more than one hundred cattle and calves were destroyed in the barn.

Fortunately, Equity had carried the proper insurance and all of the loss was covered. However, the location of the original building was such that it would now be impossible to provide sufficient space for truck movement and parking on the property that Equity owned, and no adjacent space was available. The old yards had been large enough for the market when it was built but the operations were already crowded and it was logical that a new market would add to an already growing volume of trucking.

The Equity Board immediately called together a committee to find a suitable location upon which to build a new market. It was discovered that one of Equity's patrons owned a farm just south of the I-90 and State Highway 53 intersection south of Eau Claire. He was willing to sell a field adjacent to the highway; it was large enough to use, and



*August 1971 fire at Altoona which destroyed over 100 cattle*

located so that the driveways in and out of the property would be convenient. The State Highway Department permitted access from this highway and the board moved to acquire the property at an acceptable price.

The new market went up during the winter. With Harold Harris, the market manager, supervising construction the market was ready to open early in the spring of 1972.

It was important to provide Equity's patrons with a livestock market alternative during the rebuilding period. With the cooperation of Equity's truckers in the district, and enough space at the Stratford market in the areas east of Eau Claire, the majority of the Altoona patrons continued to see their livestock go to Equity even though Stratford was about 100 miles away for those producers living west of Eau Claire. A nice thing to note is that the new Altoona market would not only be larger than the original

facility, but would be so designed that it could be readily expanded if needed, and soon expansion was needed. The Altoona market had for many years been Equity's leading volume market and very quickly regained its position.



*Altoona land purchase discussions*



*1975 - Pete May welcoming a group for Equity at Governor Lucy's Co-op Month kick-off. Glenn Georing on right.*

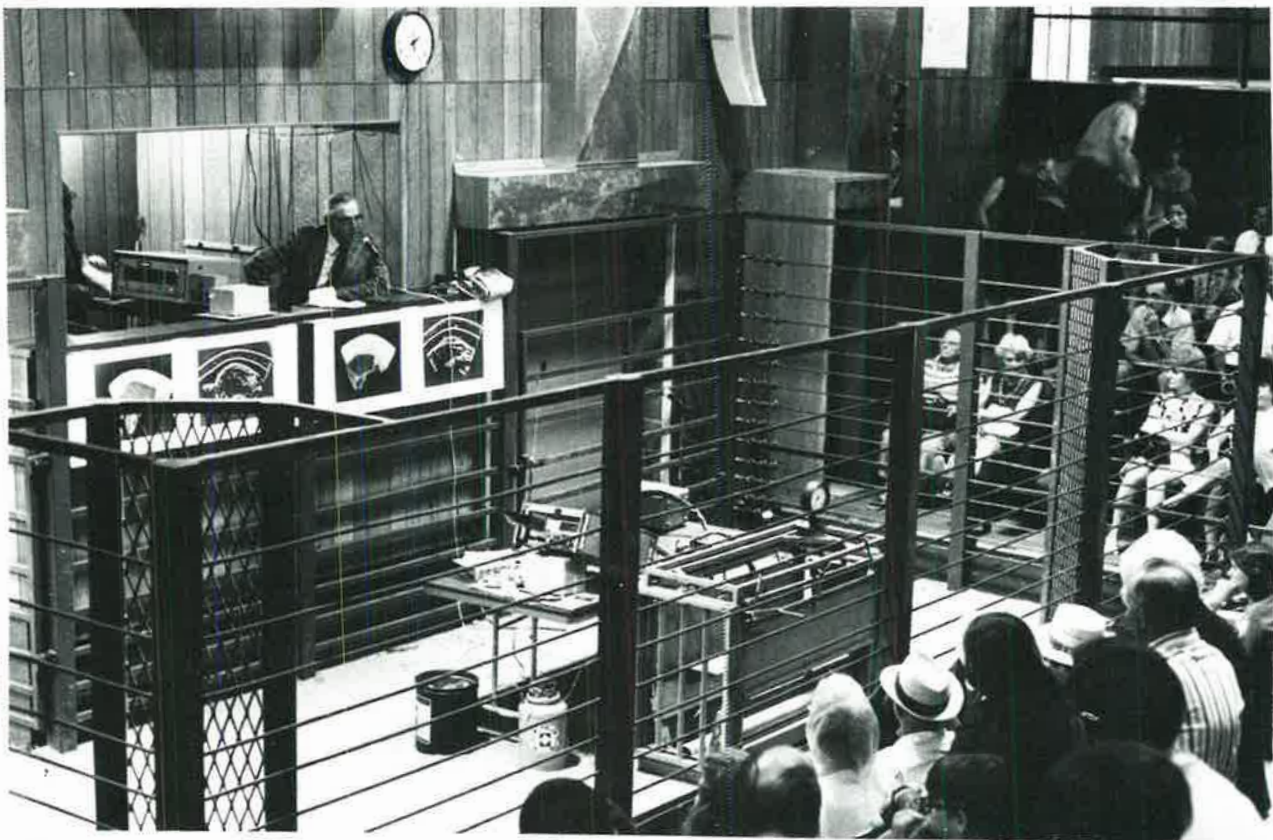
# EQUITY'S PERIOD OF SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH

## *Other Opportunities for the Cooperative*

During the late 60s and early 70s, Equity looked into other membership possibilities. As early as 1956, Equity had entered discussions about marketing feeder pigs. The Wisconsin Feeder Pig Cooperative was established and Equity had no interest in competing, but did offer cooperation.

In 1968, another feeder pig cooperative, Midwest Livestock Producers, announced its intention to become a general livestock marketing agency, starting with marketing dairy heifer calves. A period of "tug-of-war" ensued, with Midwest Livestock Producers demanding exclusive marketing of all livestock.

Several independent livestock dealers looked to this as an opportunity to weaken the cooperative structure within Wisconsin. But Equity's membership moved to the forefront and mounted a convincing, widespread informational campaign about the livestock markets, the direction they were headed, and the role Equity had played and would continue to play in their development. The outcome was greater marketing opportunities for all members.



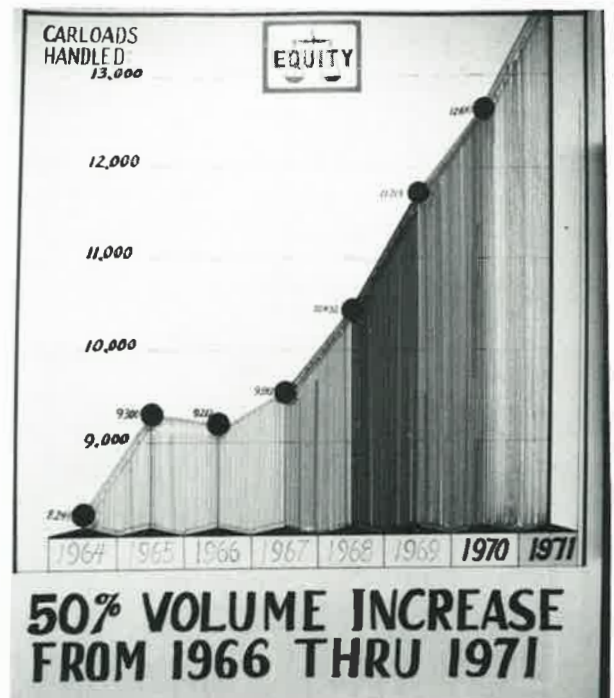
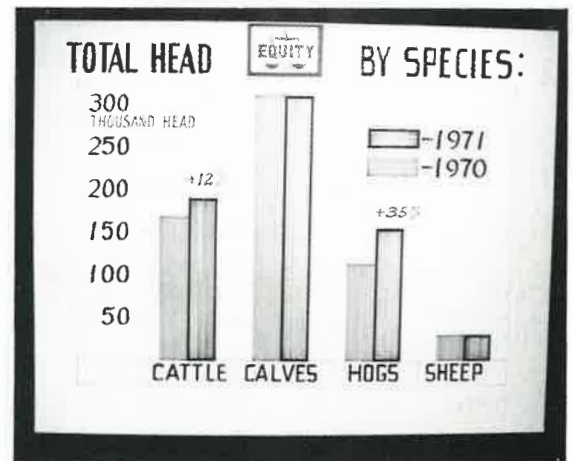
*Altoona sales meeting in April 1972*



Equity's IBM



Equity's Livestock Newswire in 1972





Russell Hvam and John Jenks

### *Another Transition*

As Equity entered its 50th year in 1972, General Manager Russell G. Hvam announced his plans to retire due to ill health. Russ Hvam worked with the Board to provide continued strong and visionary leadership for the membership, and conducted his duties admirably during a period of significant challenge.

The Equity Board chose John D. Jenks as the third general manager in Equity's history.

Born and raised in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, John D. Jenks served in the United States Marines during the Korean War, and attended the University of Ottawa, a small college in Kansas. In 1960, John started as an auditor with the State of Wisconsin, where he became familiar with farming operations and the cooperative movement. It was a relationship which would last his entire working career.

John was hired by Russell Hvam to serve as Equity's controller in 1963, having extensive experience and exposure to Equity during his years as a state auditor.

John D. Jenks recalls those early years:

*"I became Equity's Vice President of Finance in Milwaukee and we moved here (to Baraboo) in 1966 when we formed a Board of Directors consisting of three members from Wisconsin Dairies, three from Equity and three from Tri-State. I'm the only remaining member of that original board."*

Describing the unique arrangement of the three cooperatives working together and sharing the new building, John says:

*"We shared, not only the facilities, but also the computer system. The main reason was that computers were so expensive in the middle 1960s. Not only did we share one between the three organizations but we also got*



C. William Geary

*involved with service bureau work for other cooperatives. We had as many as 12 clients at one time."*

*"But as Tri-State grew and Wisconsin Dairies grew and Equity grew; the need for the computer time was necessary for the three members and we phased out the outside service work. That organization, Cooperative Service Center is now shared between Tri-State and Equity, as Wisconsin Dairies has relocated and built their own headquarters next door."*

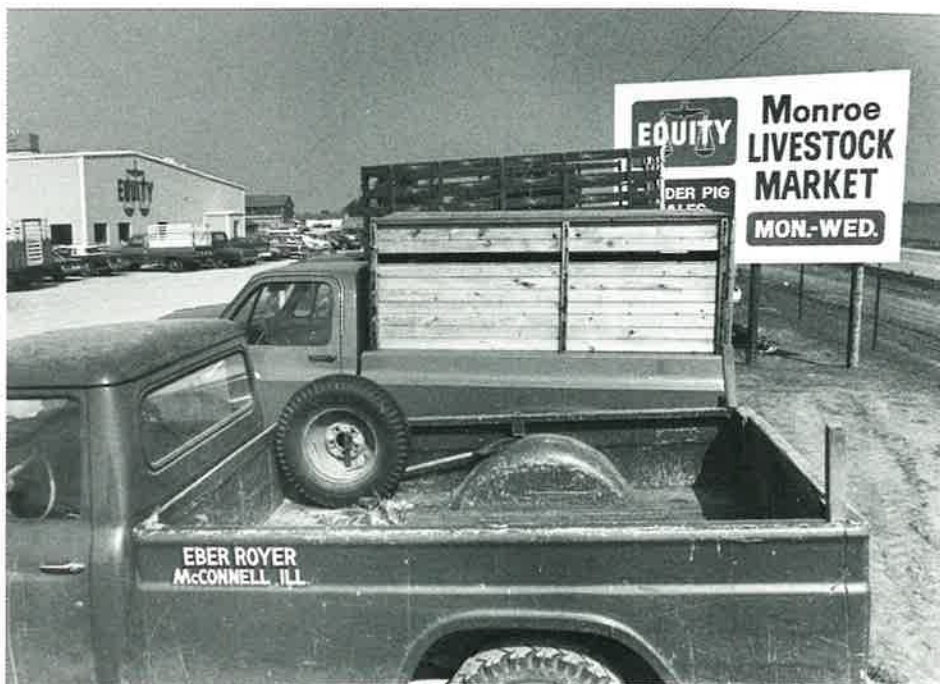
No sooner did John D. Jenks take over the reins as general manager, when he appointed another notable force in Equity's history C. William Geary. Bill would come on board as assistant general manager, a post he would hold for more than a quarter century. Clark County native Bill Geary had been on Equity's team since 1968, coming to the cooperative after several years as a supervisor for Oscar Mayer and Company's livestock marketing centers.

### *A Return to Monroe*

Equity had operated a terminal market at Monroe, Wisconsin from 1948 through 1959. During those years, Monroe's operations were never large, and the continued existence of the Milwaukee and Chicago terminal markets, combined with Oscar Mayer's presence in Madison, limited the branch market's scope.

By the late 1960s, conditions had changed dramatically. The Milwaukee and Chicago markets were in deep decline and Oscar Mayer was no longer buying direct. Equity seized the opportunity and built a specially-designed auction market just south of Monroe. An extensive informational campaign was waged to interest producers in using the market's services. There was also the hope of

attracting northern Illinois producers. Both initiatives resulted in huge successes for Equity's producer-members.



*Equity's Monroe Market*



## Technological Innovations

Equity expanded feeder pig operations in the early 1980s, and in the process, realized the importance that technology could play in this market. Some pig and lamb sales were eventually conducted electronically through computerized networks. An upgrade to newer, state-of-the-art computer technology, owned and operated solely by Equity, allowed the Cooperative Service Center to better serve the membership.

This presented the opportunity to establish a new kind of computerized marketing possibility for members; "Cornbelt Lamb Electronic Auction".

John D. Jenks describes the start-up of electronic marketing:

*"This was originally done by a federal grant with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in electronic marketing. Back in the early 70s, we actually took over from the government the computerized marketing of lambs, and it's probably the most successful computerized marketing system in the country."*

*"We sell lambs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for producers of eight different states with as many as 10 different buyers and that's been most successful. It's kind of a niche market."*

*"We were the first livestock marketing cooperative in the country that tried computerized marketing and we stayed with the lambs, we've experimented on everything, we've experimented with veal calves and hogs -- some species take off and some don't. It all depends on packer acceptance of the system and whether they participate or not."*

# EQUITY

NEWS ROUND-UP  
"The Farmers' Preference — Our Best Reference"  
Official Publication of the Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association  
Volume 15, Number 12  
March/April 1982 Our 50th Year (USPS 178-240)

## It's Annual Meeting Time

### Our 60th Anniversary March 20 At Stevens Point Holidome

An informative and interesting agenda is planned for Equity's Diamond Jubilee Anniversary. That session will convene in the Holidome at Stevens Point Saturday, March 20.

The agenda includes the election of three directors, action by voting delegates on a number of important resolutions, year-end reports from members of your staff and guest speakers.

Voting delegate registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. in the corridor along poolside. Another registration area is located in the rear of the hotel lobby for annual meeting guests.

Lunch will be served at 11:00 a.m. and the business session is scheduled to get underway at 12:30 p.m.


**Business Agenda**

President Lynn M. Merow, Sports, will preside over the annual business meeting. At that session, Secretary-Treasurer John Siegmund will present the minutes from last year's annual meeting for review and approval. Charles E. Fisher, Equity's Director of Finance will present the audited financial report for fiscal year 1981.

John D. Jenks, Equity's Executive Vice President and General Manager will review last year's marketing activities, provide delegates with an update on Equity's growth and discuss plans for your cooperative's future.

The terms of three directors expire and elections will be held to fill those positions. Directors with their terms expiring represent the Monroe Market, Straiford Market, and Ripon Market.

### Guest Speaker



Charlie Willey, Moline, Illinois calls himself a "serious humorist" and will address Equity's annual meeting.

An obviously satisfied convention organizer wrote to Willey recently, "The highlight of our convention was you. I have never seen the members stand and applaud a speaker as they did you."

Willey brings 30 years of experience as a professional speaker to the podium with him. He's been a successful minister for 26 years, a marriage counselor, a community youth worker, a selector, a community chaplain, and a consultant to business and industry. He also spent seven years on a daily radio and television show.

Willey's travels at a public speaker have taken him around the world three times.

"This man is a champion in human relations and believes that people can laugh and learn at the same time," according to a Producer's Livestock Marketing Association spokesman where Willey appeared before their annual meeting.

**EQUITY COOPERATIVE LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION'S 60th Annual Meeting**

Where: Stevens Point Holidome

When: March 20

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. with lunch following at 11:00 a.m. and the business session at 12:30 p.m.

Equity Newsletter and 5th logo

# EQUITY'S MEMBERS FACE CHANGES IN THE 1980s

## *Another Financial Crisis for Farm Producers*



John Siegmund, Chairman of the Board

The late 1970s and early 1980s was a period of high inflation in the United States' economy. The farm producers were especially hard hit. These times were almost as tough as the days of the Great Depression for many farmers. Family-owned farm ownership decreased at an alarming rate and this process hit Equity's members as well.

Current Equity Board Chairman John Siegmund considers the 80s as the toughest days for Equity's members:

*"Some of the most challenging times came in the mid 80s when we saw the farm financial crisis. That was very difficult for many of our members and for our cooperative, too, because we went through the high inflation, high interest rates. When the high values of land fell, it really created a financial stress on our members and on our cooperative."*

*"During the past 10 years we've seen a number of the smaller farms selling out the livestock and renting the land, or else just selling everything out. If you look at what it costs to operate and the cost of new equipment, it's down to the bottom line; if you can't make money then you need to do something else."*

The end result is a dramatically smaller number of family-owned farms in Wisconsin and across the nation. Through the shift, Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association never wavered in its support of and faith in the importance of working together for the benefit of all agricultural producers.



1982 Management Team (left to right): Jeffrey D. Morton, Controller; Richard Voltz, Director of Marketing; C. William Geary, Assistant General Manager and Director of Communications; John D. Jenks, Executive Vice President and General Manager, and Charles E. Fischer, Director of Finance.



## Other Accomplishments

In the early 1980s, Equity was on the offensive, developing more benefits to the members. John D. Jenks recalls some of the moves with pride:

*"When Oscar Mayer stopped slaughtering hogs in Madison we knew we needed to get some more facilities other than just in our auction markets in that area. We built the Arlington hog market in the early 80s, the largest hog marketing center in the state of Wisconsin."*

*"Then we purchased Waukon - the crown jewel of the Iowa auction markets and that's done well for us in feeder cattle marketing, as far as facilities."*

*"Another great joint venture was the deal struck with IBP, which had never been done before. We were able to convince IBP it would be better that we buy all their hogs for them that fit their market specifications. They finally agreed to that after about six weeks. Since 1989 that packer joint venture has worked out well."*

In 1985, Equity established a commodity division and hired Alan Buchner, a licensed commodity broker, to expand the hog and cattle forward contracting programs. This provided membership assistance in hedging and option services and a full-time broker to handle all commodity futures trading.

Equity's membership optimistically looked to the 1990s as a time of promise and accomplishment for everyone.

In the last decade of the 20th century, Equity moved to achieve some of the organization's greatest accomplishments.

## EQUITY IN THE '90S

### Sales Expansion

During the 1990s, sales volume at Equity grew tremendously, making the association one of the nation's largest and most successful of its kind.

John D. Jenks is particularly proud of the increased volume, especially as it marks the capstone of his illustrious career as president and C.E.O. John said:

*"Back in 1972, Equity's net worth was about \$600,000 and the sales volume was \$50 or \$60 million a year. With the addition of new operations, new branches, new services we have been as high as \$500 million in sales. That figure fluctuates with the value of the product sold. Our net worth is now at \$8.6 million, so we have averaged over 40 percent gain per year."*



Alan Buchner



Equity's 5th logo



Offered in 1991, Equity's Producers' Video Auction run with NLP offered a unique way of marketing cattle.



John D. Jenks

*"I was not experienced in livestock marketing, that's why I teamed up with Bill Geary. Right from the start he became vice president of marketing and we worked great as a team for the 25 year period in building Equity from 20,000 producers to now over 60,000."*

*"We're one of the most financially sound livestock cooperatives in the country. In spite of building that net worth to \$8.6 million we've also revolved the whole equity system so our patrons are now on a 14 year revolvment program."*

In 1991, Equity offered a new service to the membership through the Producers Video Auction, run in conjunction with the National Livestock Producers. That year, 5,000 head of feeder cattle were marketed by taping video at Altoona and Johnson Creek, that were connected to other markets around the nation.

The following year, Equity added its wholly owned subsidiary, Equity Livestock Credit Corporation. It provides producers with a full line of agricultural lending.

### ***Acquisition of Midwest Livestock Producers***

John D. Jenks reserves broad enthusiasm for the hard work of Equity's Board in the acquisition of Midwest Livestock Producers, a one-time competing cooperative. Overtures to merge the two organizations started as early as 1972, but the actual union did not take place for 25 years.

*"Back in 1972 we saw two cooperative livestock marketing agencies in the state of Wisconsin: Equity and Midwest Livestock Producers (which was an affiliate of Wisconsin Farm Bureau). I think farmers were under the impression that by having two cooperatives competing against each other, it meant higher prices. In reality, higher prices come from competition of buyers at the auction market, not one agency against another. Splitting buyers forces prices downward."*

*"We felt that 25 years ago, if we could put the organizations together, we would become more efficient by having fewer auctions, fewer sales and more volume at those sales, resulting in the packers paying more dollars for the livestock."*

*"We sat down and negotiated from January to June 22, 1996 and finally purchased all the assets of Midwest Livestock Producers. Two of the auction markets were already closed, we closed two more and presently operate six of their 10 facilities which now mix with our overall operation."*

*"Now we probably control 75-80 percent, if not more, of the livestock marketed by auction in the state of Wisconsin. We closed some of our small volume sale days and now run more efficiently. We've hired their best people, and what we've been able to do is actually reduce our overhead costs and spread that less overhead charges to 22 divisions rather than 16."*

*"As early as July we could see the positive results already to the point that October (1996) was the highest month of profit in the history of the company in 75 years."*



**Midwest Livestock Producers Cooperative**  
Francis Creek, Wisconsin 54214 Phone Manitowoc 414-682-6378

September 14, 1972

Mr. John Jenks  
Equity Livestock Market  
Baraboo,  
Wisconsin

Dear John:

Just a few commentaries and observations. I like deeply interested in a mutually satisfactory merger, one that maintains the dignity of both parties and provides the management personnel a sense of security so that they feel opted to make every effort to have the new company grow.

1. Once the boards have reached a firm decision, there shall be a multitudinous amount of legal work involved in the restructuring especially from Equities side.

2. In the meantime I would like to have us begin doing some things together, some we have already discussed.

- a. A joint news release
- b. The Farm Bureau- Producer organizations met in Michigan the 28th and 29th of Sept. I suspect the merger talk will surface.
- c. Before or after that date, and I would suggest Sunday September 24th or October 1st we ought to have a staff managers and wife get together to clear the air of misconceptions and establish a positive attitude. We normally meet on Sundays, because of Saturday feeder cattle sales.
- d. The most important "new idea" in livestock marketing that's going to surface this decade is the teletype system. Early movement on it is important (received a phone call this A.M. to inform me that one other National Farm Organization was airing its usage in cattle marketing at its Colorado meeting this next week).
- e. We plan on an October exposure of the Feeder Pig Teletype to the Wisconsin public about the middle of October. I would like to start work promptly on applying it to feeder pig selling throughout our new organization. Jointly we could reap an industry bonanza with it- and need to.
- f. Our orders for feeder cattle are

unbelievable, as must be yours, we should devise a system of filling orders promptly, by using the entire market network. (this should be a topic for discussion with the managers).

g. Our dairy herd replacement center is constantly searching for springers for out of state shipment- an alert throughout organization should expedite movement.

These are some of the areas, where I feel we can begin working promptly after the boards have reached some basic understandings and give us a go-ahead. I hope our views are similar.

Cooperatively yours,

*Norval*  
Norval Dvorak  
General Manager

P.S. On the purchase of the Nolan markets, I hope you see fit to get non-competing clauses from the Brothertons.  
This is imperative.

CC/ Don Haldeman- President  
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

## EQUITY AT 75 - AND BEYOND

### *An Organization Reflects*



John Jenks and Gregory Beck

Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association observes 75 years serving the livestock producers of Wisconsin and beyond in 1997. The markets have changed dramatically from the days when producers relied heavily on private treaty sales at the once great terminal market in Milwaukee.

By working together in true "cooperation", local shipping associations and producers have seen the benefits of the auction market - spearheaded, championed and introduced by Equity in 1957.

Equity's members have persisted and flourished through difficult financial times, both within the organization and in the overall agricultural economy. With steady attention to the details of the balance sheet, Equity has become leaner, stronger and smarter.

And in the past 25 years, Equity has expanded, prospered, and steadily grown in market share and services to members.

The organization is poised for a new century and new millennium in a strong position to be the dominant force in livestock marketing for decades to come.

As the organization pauses to reflect, John D. Jenks sees a positive future for Equity:

*"We've taken the first step to consolidate the cooperative livestock marketing in the state of Wisconsin. Next I see the same thing happening on a regional scale, whether it's Michigan Livestock Exchange or the Interstate Livestock Producers of Illinois or Ohio Producers or Central Livestock Association to our west in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota."*

*"That's the next step; consolidation of more of a territory rather than state-wide livestock marketing. But I won't be around for that next step."*

John D. Jenks announced his retirement as CEO effective with the end of 1996. Gregory A. Beck, former senior vice president at Michigan Livestock Exchange was chosen to take over the helm as the fourth president of Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association in 1997. He follows a tall tradition of visionary leaders, who have worked diligently and faithfully for Equity's membership.

# HOW EQUITY WORKS

## A Cooperative's Structure

Any cooperative organization is an entity that benefits all the members. But Equity's structure is fairly unique to agriculture and not as clearly understood by the general public.

Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association is unique among cooperatives in its federated structure of independent shipping associations.

Long-time Senior Vice President Bill Gearý explains the system:

*"Equity is made up of 39 smaller livestock shipping associations. These are separately chartered, individually identified cooperatives through which the entire membership that markets livestock through the Equity cooperative would be assigned."*

*"If I were located in a specific area, I would be assigned as a member of one of the local shipping associations. That shipping association is the actual member of the parent company (Equity). So it's sort of a three tiered effect, the members (60,000 members out there), are all a part of one of those 39 local shipping associations, and those associations in turn become the direct members of the parent co-op, Equity."*

*"Those associations are the holders of all common stock of the parent cooperative (Equity) so any profit made by Equity at year end goes back then on a pro-rata basis; based on the amount of business done by the local association. In turn then, through its own Board of Directors, the local shipping association determines the patronage and the return of money to the individual members."*

*"This would be distinguished from cooperatives that refer to themselves as direct membership where each individual producer would be a direct member of the parent. Equity has that inner link out there."*

*"One of the great strengths that Equity's structure has brought about was that each one of those associations had its own elected board of directors (elected by its peers, its members) and that board, which at many times as I recall neighbored in the area of 300 individuals, serves as directors or spokespersons for those associations. They become an ideal public relations part of our family, helping tell the cooperative story and being a liaison between the member, the producer, and the parent."*

*"I believe Equity is the only cooperative in our nation that's structured totally in the way in which we are. There are some that are partial direct members and partial federated as our type of structure is called, but I believe Equity is the only truly federated style cooperative in existence."*

*"All Equity markets are identified as public auction markets and open to the public to use if they choose to use it as a part of their marketing*



Scott Gardner and Rich Voltz

*system. All an individual producer must do is market an animal through the cooperative in any year period and they are automatically a full voting member in the cooperative's business and have total rights to all the services that are available to the members alike."*

### **Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association 39 Local Shipping Associations**

Abrams Cooperative Livestock Shipping Association  
Antigo Livestock Shipping Association  
Beef River Livestock Cooperative  
Black River Falls Cooperative Shipping Association  
Bonduel Livestock Cooperative Shipping Association  
Cambria Farmers Union Cooperative Shipping Association  
Coleman United Cooperative Shipping Association  
Corn Belt Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Buffalo-Pepin Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Chippewa Valley Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Columbian Livestock Marketing Association  
Equity Coulee Region Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Eau Claire County Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Johnson Creek Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Kettle Moraine Lakeside Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Northeast Iowa Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Northeast Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Reedsville Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Rich Land Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Ripon Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Rock River Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Southern Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Stratford Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Upper Peninsula Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Western Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Equity Wisconsin-Illinois Marketing Cooperative  
Farmers Cooperative Livestock Marketing Association-Baraga, MI  
Farmers Cooperative Marketing Association of Price County  
Harmony Cooperative Livestock Shipping Association  
Livestock Feeding Cooperative  
Lyndhurst Cooperative Shipping Association  
New Auburn Cooperative Shipping Association  
Pulaski Shipping Association Cooperative  
Quad County Equity Livestock Marketing Cooperative  
Rusk County Cooperative Shipping Association  
Shawano Livestock Shipping Cooperative  
South West Shawano Cooperative  
Suring Cooperative Shipping Association  
Watertown Cooperative Shipping Association

## AN ORGANIZATION OF PEOPLE

Any organization that serves people is also made up of people. The chronicle of events and circumstances that have created Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association spans much of the twentieth century.

The 75-year history of Equity is sprinkled with people who have dedicated themselves to achieving excellence. The story is filled with larger-than-life characters such as Charles "Claf" Claflin, Russell Hvam and John D. Jenks.

They guided Equity to achieve success in the livestock marketing arena with the help of scores of individuals - staff members, board members, producers, and professional colleagues. They worked through others to achieve greatness for all.

Equity means a great deal to several people who have spent much of their lives involved with Equity's fortunes. Here are a few comments by several special people on what makes Equity so special to them.

Board Chairman John Siegmund has been farming in the Kewaunee, Wisconsin area since 1960 on the same farm his parents owned since 1922. He has seen many changes in agriculture over those years, but he cites his 20 year involvement with Equity as a major constant.

*"We've seen so many new programs that we developed over the years to meet our member's needs. I guess when I look back we were just basically in the auction market business selling cattle, calves, hogs, and that was it. Today we're so much more diversified than we were then."*

*"We simply needed to meet member needs, so we developed new member programs, marketing programs, that really helped grow Equity. Because it's a dynamic organization, we've developed programs that create interest for members."*

*"I always look at them as challenges and to meet our member needs. After all, we develop these programs to increase the financial well-being of our members."*



Lynn Merow

Lynn Merow has been involved with Equity for over half his life. Born in Sparta and living today in the farm home in Little Falls, Lynn operates a 980-acre farm with his two sons. His family has roots in the area since his great-grandparents started farming in the 1850s when it was called Daneville because of the number of Danish immigrant settlers.

A former regional board chairman, Lynn Merow has been on Equity's Board since 1957, missing only two meetings in that 40-year span. Lynn's perspective on Equity is as follows:

*"I think it's the broad representation from this region that has made Equity so successful that it hasn't died in 75 years! That success is due to*



*the new ideas, the broad-mindedness of all my fellow directors that I have worked with over the years, developing the new ideas, the new things other than just marketing livestock because at one time we were just in the terminal market in Milwaukee."*

*"I was with the original manager, C.F. Claflin and Russ Hvam and John D. Jenks. Now we are looking forward to a new CEO. To have been able to rub shoulders with all of these fantastic individuals has made my life seem rather unique!"*

John D. Jenks ended 25 years as president and CEO of Equity - a considerable portion of his life, as well. When asked to reflect upon what is special about Equity, he answered:

*"We keep in mind all the time that we don't own the cooperative and that the producers are people who are marketing livestock through us. We try to instill in our management team and market managers, that they're employees and these producers are the owners of this business and should be treated accordingly."*

*"They have a Board of Directors to represent them and merely delegate that responsibility to the CEO and the rest of the staff; we never forget that they are the owners and we listen to their ideas, their programs, what fits their needs best as far as marketing programs."*

*"It's what makes us all keener, sharper and more interested in our job, creating new ideas for survival because we're hired hands of the farmers."*

To say that long-time Vice President William Geary is a legendary figure among the cooperative's membership is an understatement. His open smile, willing handshake and deep familiarity with countless members has won him a legion of friends and an army of loyal colleagues wherever he goes in the state. Bill Geary's comments close this section of Equity's 75th anniversary story:

*"One of the great strengths that I found in the cooperative, even prior to my coming to the cooperative, was a very close knit, sharing, communicative, responsive, concern toward each other. Whether it be employees, fellow producers, whether it be the east side of the state versus the west side of the state, there was always a major concern for all."*

*"Equity was always spoken of as the cooperative family and I think this was one of its great, great strengths that was never highly publicized. It was that strong feeling that was always there."*

*"One of the things that I was blessed with when I came to Equity in 1968 was a gentleman by the name of Peter May. Peter was head of the public relations department. Peter was 'Mr. Cooperative'. His life was built around the cooperatives, and more specifically Equity."*

*"Peter spent a great deal of time out with the associations sharing programs, sharing concerns, sharing ideas: he was the ideal liaison as this networking structure of this cooperative operated. When Peter reached the point of retirement and I was challenged to take on that responsibility, I knew I had some very, very large shoes to fill."*

*"I found a great, great strength out there for many of these associations. When I was able to travel, in many cases great distances, to*

*attend their annual meetings, it was like a family reunion. I truly tried as much as it was humanly possible to cover all of those meetings and be a part of their family as well, on the local level."*

*"I think this built a strength, starting with Mr. May, hopefully on through my term and hopefully continuing yet today. A tremendous strength that I can only hope exists in other organizations for it truly was a meaningful level to me personally and one from the reaction of the locals, it was very important to them."*

*"It's a very warm, comfortable feeling - like being able to go home. This is a feeling that exists in this cooperative and it's been one of its great strengths."*

*"I guess from deep inside, my 28 years with the cooperative has been as good a 28 year period as anybody could experience."*



#### EQUITY'S 1996 MANAGEMENT TEAM

*Standing, left to right: Rebecca J. Knull, Vice President of Information Systems and Branch Office Management; John D. Jenks, President and C.E.O.; Alan W. Buchner, Senior Vice President and C.O.O., Vice President of Communications, Commodities and Corporate Development.*

*Seated, left to right: Richard D. Voltz, Vice President of Marketing/Cattle and Calves; Scott A. Gardner, Vice President of Marketing/Hogs and Sheep; Sean P. McNevin, Vice President of Finance and C.F.O.; and Jay R. Goff, Vice President of Credit Services and Equity Livestock Credit Corporation Manager.*

## EPILOGUE

Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association has spent 75 years serving livestock producers in Wisconsin. Throughout it has more than survived. It has flourished. It has done so for the betterment of livestock producers in the state and in the region.

Equity's legacy is one of strength through cooperation. The cooperative's 60,000 members can look with deep pride at what may be the nation's most successful livestock marketing cooperative. And they can look back with admiration on a job well done ■



### 1996 REGIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Standing, left to right: Thomas W. Thomson; Lloyd A. Holterman, Richard F. Feldbruegge,*

*F. Gary Steiner. Lynn M. Merow, Fred G. Bergman, William C. Bruins.*

*Seated, left to right: Howard W. Zellmer; Donald G. Hoffelt, Secretary/Treasurer;*

*John A. Siegmund, Chairman of the Board; John D. Jenks, President and CEO;*

*Leonard L. Nuckles, Vice Chairman of the Board; and Vernon L. Ainsworth.*

## Chairmen of the Board

J. J. Lamb, Fond du Lac	1922-?
*****	
Henry Glocke, Weyauwega	1935-1939
Ed Malcheski, Pulaski	1939-1946
Alvin Voight, Oconomowoc	1946-1949
Otto Wirth, Antigo	1949-1957
John Maier, Thorp	1957-1964
Otto Johnson, Rio	1964-1967
Vernice Anderson, Winneconne	1967-1971
Joseph Rhodes, Watertown	1971-1981
Lynn Merow, Sparta	1981-1995
John Siegmund, Kewaunee	1995-Present

*\*The minutes book, prior to 1935, has not been found, so no official records are available to denote these chairmen.*

## President and Chief Executive Officers

Charles F. Claflin	1934-1963
Russell G. Hvam	1963-1972
John D. Jenks	1972-1996
Gregory A. Beck	1997-Present

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## Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association Time Line

- 1922 March 20, first meeting to organize Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association.
- 1934 Charles F. Claflin named Equity's first general manager.
- 1936 October 1, opened a branch market in Green Bay.
- 1937 Equity purchased a building across from the Milwaukee Exchange building for office use.
- 1939 61 local shipping associations.
- 1941 Purchased a farm near Pewaukee, converted it to handle feeder stock, cattle, lambs and sheep.  
Developed a feeder livestock department.
- 1942 Equity joined the National Livestock Producers Organization.  
Developed an order buying department.
- 1943 Purchased a sales barn in Green Bay to support the market and offer feeders for sale of western and southwestern origin.
- 1946 25th year of operation.  
Sold the Pewaukee feeder farm for considerable margin over cost.  
A stockyard and office were built in Altoona and opened on May 6.  
45,000 members; \$18,132,409.11 gross sales.
- 1947 A livestock market was opened in Reedsburg in October.
- 1948 With financial help and support of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau and the Grant, Iowa and Green County Farm Bureaus, three markets were opened in Monroe, Dodgeville and Lancaster.  
In December a building was purchased two miles south of Ripon from the War Assets Administration. It was remodeled and began operation in 1949.  
"Big Four" packer strike for six weeks.
- 1949 Ripon market was opened as a private treaty market.  
11,547 carloads; highest in history.  
226,412 checks were issued to farmers for livestock.  
\$35,394,958.59 in gross sales.
- 1952 15,100 carloads; 965,769 headage; \$44,442,147.63 gross sales.
- 1953 18,137 carloads; \$37,673,389.08 gross sales.
- 1954 Ripon organizes the first lamb pool in July.

- 
- 1956 The "big decision". Declining receipts at Milwaukee and the private treaty markets. Is the auction system the way to go?
- 1957 Richland Center and Altoona auction markets opened.
- 1958 Bonduel, Reedsville and Ripon auction markets opened.
- 1959 188 local shipping associations.  
Stratford and Sparta auction markets opened.
- 1960 Johnson Creek opened on October 10.  
A total of 90 lamb pool sales.
- 1962 188 shipping associations (peak); 50,000 members; 28 full-time and 142 part-time employees.
- 1963 Charles F. Claflin passes away; Russell G. Hvam named Equity's second general manager.
- 1967 Moved to new offices at Baraboo (Equity, Tri-State, Wisconsin Dairies).
- 1970 626,523 headage; net savings \$78,018; 43,524 members.
- 1971 Lost Altoona market to fire; started construction of new market.  
44,373 members; 687,237 headage; to date total patronage refunded \$600,000.
- 1972 50th year of operation.  
Opened new Altoona market.  
Net savings \$137,631.  
Russell G. Hvam retires; John D. Jenks named Equity's third general manager.
- 1973 Opened Zumbrota, Minnesota auction market.  
51,675 members; net savings \$88,628.00
- 1974 Leased and operated a market in Menominee, Michigan.
- 1976 Opened a new auction market at Monroe in September.  
878,571 headage; net savings \$191,925.00  
Richland Center market enlarged.
- 1977 918,518 headage.
- 1978 Great Lakes Order Buyers, Inc., was formed as a wholly owned subsidiary.  
Lamb pool program reorganized into three pools each day.
- 1980 1,140,178 headage; 55,000 members; net savings \$395,142.00.  
Vernice Anderson, past chairman of the board, is elected Vice President of National Live Stock Producers Association.

- 
- 1982 Opened two hog marketing centers; Blue Mounds and Lancaster.  
Expansion of hog contracting programs with Sioux City.  
Establishment of a working agreement with Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association and American Feeder Pig Cooperative.
- 1984 56,046 members; 1,386,642 headage; gross sales \$249,470,163.  
Vernice Anderson, past chairman of the board, elected President of National Live Stock Producers Association.
- 1985 Established Commodity Division.  
New addition at Arlington.  
New Dairy Cattle Division.  
New Farm Auction Service.  
Johnson Creek 25th anniversary.  
1,414,652 headage; 54,500 members.
- 1986 Expanded Special Fed Veal Division.  
Acquired a hog marketing center in Cambria.
- 1987 Gross sales topped \$300,093,019.  
Computerization of five auction markets.  
Development and implementation of the Livestock Feeding Program.  
Young Farmer Program started.
- 1988 1,897,983 headage; gross sales \$386,459,104.  
Development of a feasibility study to consider consolidating Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association, Midwest Livestock Producers and Central Livestock Association.  
Plans to restructure and offer CHAMP II.
- 1989 High school vocational agriculture cooperative course work; 100 schools.  
Gross sales record \$387 million.  
Livestock Feeding Program representing \$10 million in value.
- 1990 Gross sales \$429,539,540; net proceeds \$459,728.  
Purchased the Northeast Iowa Sales Commission auction market in Waukon, Iowa.  
Livestock Feeding Program -- \$12.5 million in inventory.  
Cooperative Service Center office building addition.
- 1991 Net proceeds \$704,307.  
Cooperative participation in the Producer Video Auction.  
Cattle marketed increased 13 percent over 1990.  
Livestock Feeding Program placed over 57,000 head of livestock.  
Equity Johnson Creek underwent major renovation.

- 
- 1992 Gross sales \$460,021,126; membership 54,426.  
Equity Livestock Credit Corporation formed.  
Cattle marketed increased 12.6 percent and hog numbers increased 20.2 percent over 1991.  
Cooperative paid ahead on qualified patronage refund credits.
- 1993 Formation of Equity Global Agri-Services, Inc.  
Formation of Today's Electronic Auction Market Wisconsin; cooperative computerized feeder pig marketing program with Central Livestock Association.
- 1994 Spring Grove Livestock check kiting scheme for \$2 billion. Equity's lost \$525,000. All funds recovered through insurance.  
Great Lakes Order Buyers close calf operation in Watertown.  
Equity Global Agri-Services closes after losing \$125,000.
- 1995 Inception of Direct Livestock Marketing Association.  
Trend of reduced volume at auction markets continues.
- 1996 Equity celebrates its 75th anniversary.  
Midwest Livestock Producers purchased for \$1,812,500 from Wisconsin Farm Bureau; six auction markets added: Barron, Beetown, Dodgeville, Ettrick, Lomira and Marion.  
John D. Jenks retires; Gregory A. Beck named Equity's fourth president and chief executive officer.  
39 local shipping associations; 60,000 patron members.  
Headage 1.3 million; gross sales \$336,482,485.