

Town and Country

Iowa is a great agricultural state, but in recent years her industrial might has been growing rapidly. In 1950 Iowa factories outproduced Iowa farms: the estimated value of manufactured products was \$2,500,000,000, in comparison to a cash farm income of only \$2,000,000,000.

The bulk of Iowa's manufacturing deals with the farm — either in the production of machines and tools for the farmers or in the processing of the farmers' products. In a state famous for its cattle, meat packing is naturally a leading industry. In 1950, for the second consecutive year, the volume of livestock slaughtered by Iowa packing plants exceeded that of any other state. Federal estimates for the first ten months of the year indicated that Iowa packers handled 11.7 per cent of all cattle, calves, hogs, sheep, and lambs processed in the nation. The state's main packing plants are located at Des Moines, Sioux City, Ottumwa, and Waterloo.

The production of machinery for Iowa's farms is likewise an important industry. For that reason, the strike of some 13,000 workers at the John Deere plants in Illinois and Iowa hampered Iowa business, both industrial and agricultural. This

107-day strike, affecting the Iowa plants at Des Moines, Waterloo, Ottumwa, and Dubuque, was finally settled on December 16. The strike, which began on September 1, was marked with considerable violence, especially at Des Moines and Waterloo.

The sale of the busy Middle Amana refrigerator factory, where nationally-known freezers are built, was an important change in the Iowa industrial scene in 1950. Not since 1932, when the changeover in the ownership of the Amana Colonies occurred, had there been so much excitement in the seven villages of the Community of True Inspiration. Howard Hall, a Cedar Rapids industrialist, headed the concern which bought the refrigerator plant at a price which was expected to net the Society between \$1,500,000 and \$1,750,000.

Iowa's industry, which ranges from food processing to washing machines, was prosperous in 1950. The 3,858 manufacturing plants in 566 Iowa towns employed approximately 148,000 people at an average weekly wage of \$59.26. A report on checks cleared through Iowa banks showed that business activity had reached an all-time high in 1950, with an increase of 11 per cent over the figures for 1949. This increased business activity was reflected in a decline in the state unemployment figures: claims for unemployment insurance dropped 33 per cent, from 32,711 in 1949

to 20,813 in 1950. During June alone 11,678 workers were placed in jobs in Iowa.

In spite of the growing industrial strength of the state, the Iowa farm continues to be the largest single source of revenue. The state has 25 per cent of all the grade A farmland in the nation, and produces over 10 per cent of the nation's food. A typical Iowa farm averages 173 acres; there are over 200,000 of them on the state's 35,000,000 acres. These farms produce more corn, hogs, oats, poultry, eggs, and finished cattle for market than any other state in the Union, and Iowa's total production of grain crops leads the nation.

Iowa's bluegrass seed "business" is a growing concern. Dating back to pioneer days, bluegrass has long been a popular crop in the state. In the early 1890's two huge bluegrass palaces were constructed to draw attention to the importance of the crop. The Creston area is today one of the largest bluegrass seed producing regions in the world; farmers there even supply the seed to the famous bluegrass state, Kentucky. Because of a blight, the 1950 crop was less than the previous year, when seed men in Iowa produced 35 per cent of all the bluegrass seed harvested in the world. More than half of this production comes from an area within 35 miles of Creston. Farmers pay from \$15 to \$30 per acre for their seed.

Iowa farm values rose \$20 an acre for the year ending November 1, 1950. This increase was the

largest in the state's history, except for the boom year of 1920. In addition, the number of farm sales increased for the first time since 1943. During the summer of 1950 land buyers made a noticeable shift from the high to the low priced areas. Farmers and other buyers, without sufficient cash for a large down payment in the higher priced areas, purchased farms in the northeast and southern sections of the state. One of the highest prices paid for Polk County land in recent years was that of \$410 an acre, while a farm south of Shenandoah sold at auction for an average of \$420 an acre.

The high rate of farm production was continued in 1950, in spite of a none too favorable growing season. The final estimate of the Iowa corn crop made in December placed the total at 463,655,000 bushels or an average of 48 bushels to the acre. This was a sizeable decrease from the 550,608,000 bushels produced in 1949, probably due partly to the fact that Iowa farmers cut their corn acreage by 1,600,000 acres in compliance with the government's crop control program. According to the Production and Marketing Administration (PMA), more than 67 per cent of Iowa farms participated in this agricultural conservation program. Soybeans increased from 30,000,000 to 42,262,000 bushels. Iowa oats averaged 41 bushels to the acre, with over six million acres in production. However, the total of all grains harvested in Iowa during the year was 10 per cent below the

1949 tonnage, with production totaling approximately 18,141,000 tons. In addition, almost 21,000,000 hogs, over 5,000,000 cattle, and some 900,000 sheep were raised by Iowa farmers in 1950.

Plagued first by a cool, wet, and late spring, Iowa farmers later were confronted with a serious infestation of corn borers. In 1949 this disease had caused an estimated total loss of over \$150,000,000, or an average of \$750 per farm for the state as a whole. Meetings were planned to teach farmers how to cope with the disease. These meetings, first held at Harlan on June 7, Cherokee on June 8, and Algona on June 9, were sponsored by *The Iowa Farm and Home Register*, the *Des Moines Register and Tribune*, the extension services of Iowa State College, and county, farm, and civic groups.

One of the most effective methods of killing the corn borer is by plane. This involves flying across fields at knee-height, laying down a fog of DDT from nozzles in booms stretched out under the wings. Pilots flying at 75 miles per hour must be alert for fences, telephone poles, and even gentle rises in the land. A good pilot can spray 20 acres in about 12 minutes. In July there were approximately 100 flying outfits ready to start spraying activities. Cool weather retarded the second crop of corn borers, so that total losses for 1950 amounted to only 75 to 80 million dollars.

While harvesting their rich crops of grain, and feeding their large herds of cattle, Iowa farmers continued their efforts to help provide food for the famine-stricken areas of the world. Through the Christian Rural Overseas Program — popularly known as "CROP" — \$175,000 worth of produce was donated by Iowa farmers during 1950. George J. Steinbron, a Jessup farmer, was the first Iowan to sign up for the Friendship Acres Program of CROP, which provides that farmers set aside a part of their acreage for the less fortunate of other lands. In July the Iowa Development Commission reported that an estimated 400,000 bushels of seed corn had been planted on Iowa farms for the aid of Europeans.

The federal Department of Agriculture is building up a large organization in Iowa. More than 1,500 persons draw a large part or all of their salaries from this one department. Largest of the federal agricultural agencies functioning in Iowa is the PMA, with 119 employees in Des Moines, and over 300 county and 4,809 township committeemen in the field. The PMA supervises various governmental programs, including crop loans, storage of grain either under government loan or owned outright by the government, and acreage control allotments.

The aid received by Iowa farmers from the federal government during the 1950 crop year totaled \$9,721,000, an increase of \$1,215,000 over the

1949 payment. This money compensates farmers for materials, work, or practices deemed essential in conserving soil and water resources.

An important feature in soil conservation publicity is the plowing contest. At the state contour plowing contest held on September 16, first place was won by Robert Barrow, a thirty-six-year-old farmer who operates a 560-acre farm near Keosauqua in partnership with his father. Tom Daugherty of Eddyville previously had won the state level land plowing title. Between 48,000 and 50,000 people attended the National Soil Conservation Field Day held at Zearing on September 19, where more than twenty soil conservation and farm improvement practices were demonstrated.

Iowans won their full share of honors and prizes at the various livestock shows. Russell Bucks of Davenport was crowned "king" of the nation's cattle feeders after he showed the grand champion carload of fat cattle at the International Livestock Exposition at Chicago. The thirty-two-year-old newcomer broke the long winning streak of Karl Hoffman of Ida Grove who had a record of twenty grand championships.

The grand champion load of hogs in the swine contest at the Chicago show was shown by Stanley K. Swift, a twenty-three-year-old veteran of Gilman. In the horse show, Gay Warrior, owned by Charles W. Willhoit and Son of Batavia, was named reserve champion junior Clydesdale stal-

lion under three years. Iowa State College showed the reserve grand champion steer at the International Livestock Exposition, where Iowans had ten steers in the final judging. John Willier of Bloomfield placed second in the sheep shearing contest.

In January, Cross Bar Classic, a steer shown by Arthur Timm of Tama, carried his Hereford class crown to the grand championship in the Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show at Fort Worth, Texas. The 1,085-pound animal also won the Hereford championship at the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

For both "Town and Country," 1950 was a prosperous year for Iowans, in spite of strikes and bad weather. As the year closed, Iowa business, both urban and rural, looked forward to increased demands for its products, due largely to the defense program of the national government.

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