

"Egg Auction First of its Kind in 1939"

Carroll County Times article for 24 October 1999

By Jay A. Graybeal

In the late 1930s Carroll County was the leading producer in the state's poultry industry. Local poultrymen organized an egg auction, the first of its kind in Maryland. A description of the upcoming event appeared in the March 10, 1939 issue of this newspaper:

"The Westminster Cooperative Poultry Products Auction held a public meeting Thursday evening last, in the Boy Scouts Hall, old armory building on Green street. The meeting was well attended and Mr. Frank E. Wiliar, President, called it to order with a few remarks on some of the problems and procedures which a small group of poultrymen have encountered in creating public interest in this auction, sufficient to make a start.

Prof. Gwin of the University of Maryland gave a short address pointing out that Westminster in Carroll County is an ideal location to start an organization of this kind, reminding us that Carroll County at the present time is the leading county of the State in the Poultry Industry. He also pointed out that the auction method is the least expensive and a very satisfactory way for the producer to market his products. Enabling the producer to market under a standard of size and quality, which is necessary to get the most out of any product.

Prof. Gwin introduced Mr. S. S. Buffenmyer, who will be our manager of the auction here. Mr. Buffenmyer has been in the egg business all of his life and knows it well from all angles. This also being very fortunate in this movement.

It was also pointed out that with a little care and thoughtfulness in the gathering, handling and packing of the eggs on the part of the producer will be well paid for, and after all we do not mind just a little more care when it pays good returns. Prof. Gwin also said that we as producers must not feel the worse by the auction grading their eggs for this is the organization's job and through this service it assures the buyers a certain standard of quality, for which they are willing to pay a reasonable price.

Dr. Jull then took the floor and brought out the fact that our auction will probably do more to establish grades and better quality eggs in Maryland than anything that has been done, heretofore, for the poultrymen. Dr. Jull also reminded us as poultrymen, that before our eggs get to the auction we must constantly be on the job to better our sanitary system and keep down diseases in every way, thereby, cutting that loss as much as possible, all of which helps to make a higher net gain. Then, too, we are poultrymen must strive to build up our flocks to a higher production average, which is necessary for good returns. Dr. Jull assured us that their department would go their limit by giving information and help with who has been an old standby in Carroll County for many years now, and who has been very loyal to us poultrymen in this move, then gave a few remarks. He reiterated that our county has been long in need of an efficient and up-to-date cooperative belief that looking beyond the difficulties that come with very worthwhile undertaking, success cannot help but come to we poultrymen.

Mr. Buffenmyer then taking the floor assured the poultrymen that he will cooperate in every possible manner to help grade their eggs when necessary, to start, and to give any information to them that will be necessary or helpful. And further that he would help them solve their problems whenever it be possible for him to do so.

Mr. Poffenberger and Mr. Ives also of the University of Maryland were present and spoke briefly along the lines pertaining to the marketing of eggs. Mr. Leonardson, of Washington, D. C., was present and answered quite a few questions regarding statistics along these lines. It was regretted that Mr. Lawless of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Markets was unable to be with this group.

There is no doubt in the minds of those in our state or any state, who know what auctions have done elsewhere for the poultrymen and communities in general, that this move is by no means a small or insignificant one. Neither is there doubt in the minds of our citizens but what a few years from now, the poultrymen of especially Carroll County, will look back on March 1939, as one of the biggest moves forward in the history of the poultry industry in the State of Maryland. It is with this assurance that this small pioneering group have for many months discussed the matter, worked out plans and problems far into the night, knowing that soon in the near future they will be repaid with the satisfaction of a job well done, and with the poultryman's welfare put at least one step higher.

This auction was organized with a contributing board of thirty members, and an executive board of 9 members to shoulder the responsibilities and fight the battles of Mr. Poultryman, and it is their earnest desire to do a good job for our citizens; it has already been noted the fine support which they have been given in many ways from the poultrymen in general, and they earnestly trust that this support will continue and our good people can see hence a short time when the real benefits will be reaped. These benefits will not be reaped by those starting this move, no, neither do they expect it, but in the unselfish and neighborly spirit for the betterment of our adjoining communities.

The first auction will be held Monday, March 20th, at 1:30 p.m., and each week thereafter on Mondays and Thursdays at the same hour.

Eggs will be received on Thursday, Friday and Saturday for the Monday auctions and Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for the Thursday Sales. The auction is located at the rear of the Davis Building at 56 1/2 West Main street, Westminster Maryland, rear entrance.

William E. Miller,
Secretary.

The first egg auction was deemed a great success. The eggs had been graded with the same standards as used in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Clean, white eggs brought 23 1/2 cents per dozen which was considered a very satisfactory price. Bids were received from jobbers in Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York City.

Photo caption: A young woman feeds pullets in 1942. Legacy of the Land Collection, Historical Society of Carroll County, courtesy of Carroll County Agricultural Extension Office.