

and the grading is often carried through to the consumer. Many products are moved from farms by truck, rail movement having been largely replaced for such items as milk and cream and for most of the livestock. On the other hand the railways, by the introduction of improved refrigerator cars and faster, more reliable schedules, have met the needs for the rapid and often long haul of perishable fresh and processed products. However they have had to share the growing traffic with refrigerated and other heavy trucks for hauls of all distances, but particularly short and intermediate movements.

A practice closely associated with transportation is pre-cooling of fruits and vegetables to be shipped fresh or to be stored. Of a similar nature is the pre-heating of cars or trucks for winter transport. Optimum temperatures for shipment and storage have been experimentally determined and the practices of shippers modified as necessary. The Canadian climate, with its short growing season and rigorous winter, makes it necessary to store some home-grown farm products and also certain products imported from distant growing areas. The increase in cold storage cubic capacity in the period 1948 to 1953 was about 25 p.c. The rate of growth for freezer space was higher than for cooler space, reflecting the increasing demand for frozen foods in processing and also for home consumption.

The wholesaling of food has been characterized recently by a tendency for integration with retailing and even with processing. That is, chain retailers have provided their own wholesale facilities in each large city—a co-ordinated food receiving and shipping plant. Some of the chains control farm-product processing plants organized to fill the needs of the chain outlets.

The comparatively recent development of the self-service type of retail store has revolutionized retail merchandising and has been responsible directly or indirectly for other trends such as consumer-size packaging and open refrigerated display cases. At one time self-service was generally considered to be impractical for produce and meat departments largely because of the lack of suitable packaging material that would also enable the prospective purchaser to see the contents. The introduction of transparent film in 1924 was a milestone in food merchandising and since then the improvements and refinements in both the material and in packaging techniques have resulted in its application to a great variety of agricultural food products. Further impetus was given to the self-service trend in retail stores by rising wage scales and the shortage of labour in the immediate post World War II years. The large staff required for the maintenance of bulk displays and individual selection and packaging for the customer has been substantially reduced by prepackaging. From the consumer's point of view the prepackaged product facilitates shopping and has established new standards in sanitation and cleanliness. It also enables the purchaser to identify the product by brand or trade name and by grade. Superior quality merchandise properly identified attracts repeat business while inferior quality can be recognized and rejected. Another advantage to the consumer is the fact that many commodities are trimmed and washed and excess parts of the product discarded.

While the self-service principle has been applied primarily by the larger chain organizations it is employed in modified form by many independent retailers and those in smaller communities. It should be mentioned that despite the rapid development of chain stores of various kinds in urban areas in recent years the independents continue to account for the greater volume of sales. The proportion in 1955 was 59 p.c. compared with 67 p.c. in 1949. Credit is not generally available at chains and for this and reasons of convenience the independent retailer continues to be popular.

Steadily increasing population and rising income levels in the war and postwar years have resulted in a greater demand for the constantly widening variety of foods in new forms which producers, processors and marketing agencies have to offer. These population and income considerations, together with technological developments, have made possible a substantial shift in food preparation from the kitchen to the factory. The reduction in time required for home food preparation together with the desire to attain a higher standard of living have induced many married women to secure employment outside the home. Kitchen shortcuts are of obvious value to such families.