

Transportation

11.1.4

Railways have been the traditional method of transporting agricultural products to large markets and ports. The Prairie provinces in particular rely on trains to move wheat and livestock to Canadian markets and to elevators in Vancouver, Churchill and Thunder Bay for shipment abroad. Bulky products such as sugar beets are usually shipped by rail.

Many products are now shipped by road. Although railways have retained their importance on the Prairies, many branch lines have been abandoned in other areas and most farmers now ship their produce at least part way in their own trucks. Eggs, poultry, cream, fruits and vegetables go to local markets by road and milk is generally collected at farms by tank trucks. Commercial farms and co-operatives use trucks for marketing and distributing agricultural products and in delivering supplies to farms.

Water routes supplement these means. The Great Lakes have long been used to ship grain from Thunder Bay to Eastern Canada and since the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 the lakes have been open to ocean-going vessels. Churchill is another seasonal port for Prairie grains. Vancouver and Halifax are year-round ports.

The Hall Commission on grain handling and transportation in 1977 recommended action to be taken on 10 139 kilometres (6,300 miles) of Prairie branch lines. The Prairie Rail Action Committee (PRAC) was subsequently appointed by the transport minister to examine recommendations regarding 3 702 km (2,300 miles) of line recommended for transfer to the Prairie Rail Authority as well as other proposals. As the result of government action some 2 916 km (1,812 miles) received permanent protection, 3 737 km (2,322 miles) are protected until the end of 1978 and 3 486 km (2,166 miles) were passed to the Canadian Transport Commission for abandonment proceedings. PRAC was asked to advise the government on: further transfers of branch lines to the permanent network guaranteed at least until the year 2000; abandonment of branch lines at a date to be specified by PRAC; priorities for branch line upgrading work; and the examination of the Prairie Rail Authority concept put forward by the Grain Handling and Transportation Commission.

Marketing and supplies

11.1.5

Marketing of Canada's farm products is a blend of private trading, public sales and auctions, and sales under contract and through co-operatives or marketing boards. Methods vary with type of product, region and preference of producers.

Canada's principal livestock markets are at Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton, but other outlets vary from large stockyards to country collection points. Most cattle and calves are marketed by auction at public stockyards; the remainder go directly to packing plants or are exported. Most hogs, sheep and lambs are sold directly to packing houses; sales of hogs are usually handled by marketing boards.

Egg sales in Canada are regulated by a Canadian egg marketing agency, and a turkey marketing agency serves turkey producers. Chickens raised for meat are marketed through provincial marketing boards which have authority to allocate producer quotas, set producer prices and collect levies.

Marketing fluid milk is a provincial responsibility and quality, prices and deliveries are regulated by provincial marketing agencies which estimate market requirements and assign producers a share of the market. A marketing plan allocates producers a share of the Canadian market for milk used for manufacturing. It is in effect in all provinces except Newfoundland. Market shares under this plan are administered by provincial marketing agencies under the direction of the Canadian Dairy Commission.

Most grain marketed in Canada is grown in the Prairie provinces. The Canadian Wheat Board is responsible for various aspects of marketing wheat, oats, barley, rye, flax and rapeseed in Western Canada. In Ontario all wheat grown is sold through the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board.

Fruit and vegetables are distributed through fresh and frozen food markets, canneries and other processors. Most produce is grown under a contract or a pre-arranged marketing scheme; marketing boards, producers' associations and co-operatives are common. Tobacco is controlled by marketing boards in Ontario and