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Mrs. Jones was ordering her morning's groceries. "One No. 2 can eggs, a crate of early June peas, extra fritted, one peck of Baldwin apples, U. S. No. 2, one crate of fancy grade naval oranges, mediums, and—oh, yes, a dozen eggs."

I waited in vain for sizes and specifications for that one dozen eggs but none were forth-coming. To Mrs. Jones, evidently, an egg was an egg and her only prayer was as she opened it that it would not turn into a chicken. Of how many thousands of homemakers throughout the country may the same thing be said, that they have learned to choose all other foods wisely and with discrimination, with consideration for the use to which they will be put, but that in the buying of market eggs they are, thru ignorance, absolutely indiscriminating?

An ungraded dozen of eggs such as is commonly sold in the town store may range from large brown eggs to small white ones, from dirty ones to clean ones, from fresh ones to those merging on old age. And yet the consumer pays the same price for all. Because of this the housewife fails to feel utter confidence in the egg market, and distrust builds back increased consumption.

For this reason there has grown up a distinct need for a system whereby the farm woman may market her products under definite classified grades and the town woman may buy them as such with consideration for their use and for the relative prices of the different grades.

To fill this need and to make the people of the state and ultimately of the nation not only "egg conscious" but "graded egg conscious," a project under the auspices and cooperation of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation Women, the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, the Iowa State Department of Agriculture and the Foods and Nutrition and Poultry Marketing sections of the Agricultural Extension Service of Iowa State College, has been developed which, if backed by the efforts and enthusiasm of the housewife, will force stores to comply with the increasing demand and will improve the quality of Iowa eggs by encouraging the buying and selling on a graded basis. It will tend to the elimination of waste in the marketing of eggs; will encourage the use of more eggs in the diet; will benefit urban and rural women in the way of quality and price; will disseminate knowledge regarding the Iowa egg law and regulations and finally will improve and increase the greatness of the poultry industry in Iowa.

In doing her part in carrying out this program the housewife should demand eggs on the quality basis of at least two grades. The laws of Iowa, altho they do not require that they be bought and sold in this way, establish four grades of eggs, Special Grade, Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3. The first two grades are excellent for boiling, poaching, coddling and frying. The last two grades are suitable for use with other food stuffs as in baking, in salad dressings, etc. Under the system of quality grading the average price now paid (April 1929) to farmers is 25 cents a dozen for "number 1" and 20 cents a dozen for "number 2." For ungraded eggs he receives on the average 22 cents a dozen. Therefore if he can produce high class eggs he will be in an extremely profitable position.

Together with the question of graded eggs comes that of the produce specialist and his rising importance in the poultry industry. There are at present 8336 persons in the business of buying eggs from farmers. Of these, 6336 represent stores of which the large majority are unskilled in egg selection, 1750 represent partly skilled buying stations and only 250 are skilled and competent produce packers and shippers. To go further, there is at present one egg buyer for every 25 farms. This is far too many buyers and represents an uneconmomic set-up, causing dealing in small volume, rehandling, and quality loss. Fewer buyers who are skilled, specialized and well equipped will mean better eggs for consumers and a narrower spread between producer and consumer's price. The abandonment of the trade policy by which farmers have traded the value of their eggs in other commodities at the store is increasing and will in several ways improve conditions in the industry. For example, as a substitute for direct trading in eggs will come transfer thru produce specialists who will buy graded eggs of the farmer and for a little over a cent a dozen will turn them over to the store keeper. The latter has then saved a large item of time and expense and has actually cut down the overhead. The merchant will add his usual percentage and sell the eggs graded, and the public will not only gain the satisfaction of getting what they want but will actually save money by the change.

The success of this system and its effect in speeding up consumption has been demonstrated in Canada where in 1922 there was consumed 15 dozen eggs per capita per year, while in 1928, following the adoption of the grading system, the consumption had sprung to 29.6 dozen per capita per year.

It must be well to state here what factors determine the grade of an egg. They include in interior quality the weight. A "number 1" egg must weigh out to make a 24 ounce dozen. No egg can weigh less than that weight which would make a 22 ounce dozen. Also included is the soundness of shell, cleanliness, size of the egg, and the color. Concerning the last item it has been proved by practical experience of experts that if chickens are fed the same feed, a white and brown egg are equal in nutritive value. It is believed, however, that brown eggs keep better in cold storage than do white ones.

In interior quality, determined by the use of a candling device, skill of air cell, condition of yolk, condition of white, development of germ and shell texture are considered. If an egg fails down in any of these qualifications it is not considered as a "number 1," no matter of what age.

The second requirement that should be made by a purchaser is that of the labeling eggs as fresh or otherwise. According to the Iowa egg law, eggs bought, sold, or labeled as "Special Grade 1," "Fresh, grade 1," or "2" or "3" must comply with standards established for such eggs. Failure to do this inures a fine. Eggs that have been in cold storage for 30 days must be labeled as storage eggs. All eggs must be candled for interior quality.

With the development of the project as outlined above and the general dissemination of knowledge of the laws concerning poultry products, the homemaker may hope to find a market handling more and better eggs throughout Iowa and the nation.

"Do not hang all your mottoes on the wall. Hang some of them in your heart and in your life."