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THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED STATES GRAIN MARKETING SYSTEM

by

Reynold P. Dahl



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GRAIN MARKETING SYSTEM

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THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED STATES GRAIN MARKETING SYSTEM

Reynold P. Dahl*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The reduction in grain exports and grain stocks in the 1980's resulted in excess capacity and reduced marketing margins in the U.S. grain marketing system. These along with other changes such as railroad de-regulation and government programs have induced many structural adjustments. Consolidations and closures of less efficient operations have increased and will continue in the 1990's as the system adjusts to excess capacity in grain marketing infrastructure.

Changes in transportation costs as impacted by intermodal competition and railroad deregulation have induced structural changes in the grain marketing system at both the country and terminal market levels. Many country elevators have expanded to handle unit train shipments. Others have consolidated to form sub-terminals that are replacing many country elevators. Sub-terminals are also taking over the function of older rail terminal elevators. The demise of the transit privilege and deregulation of the railroads sharply reduced the flow of grain from country points to grain exchanges in terminal markets for resale. The grain marketing system has become more decentralized with grain moving directly from gathering points in the country to domestic users or to export elevators without moving through terminal markets such as Minneapolis, Kansas City or Chicago.

Decentralization of cash grain marketing also means that terminal cash grain price quotations are not as representative of true cash grain prices as in years past. Futures prices have become even more important as a "basis" for pricing cash grain. The delivery provisions on CBOT grain futures contracts were changed in the spring of 1992 to reflect the reduced movement of grain through terminal markets such as Chicago.

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Cargill, Inc. was the largest multiple facility grain company in the U.S. in 1992. Its lead has been challenged in recent years by the Archer Daniels Midland Co. and Con Agra, Inc. which now rank second and third, respectively. These companies expanded rapidly in the 1980's, in large part through acquisitions.

The downsizing of interregional and regional grain marketing cooperatives ranked among the most significant structural changes during the past decade. This was necessitated by heavy investments in marketing infrastructure during the grain export boom and increased competition as exports declined in the 1980's. The organization of new joint ventures between regional cooperatives and large multiple-facility investor-oriented grain firms (IOF's) are new structural innovations. Cooperatives' share of grain export elevator storage capacity has declined.

The market structure of the U.S. grain export system was classified in a 1982 GAO study as (1) major multinational corporations, other than Japanese, (2) Japanese-owned or affiliated firms, (3) farmer-owned cooperatives, and (4) all other exporting firms.

Major multinational corporations are large firms that operate globally and handle much of the grain that is bought and sold in the world today. The five largest multinationals were identified in the GAO study as being Cargill, Inc.; Continental Grain Co.; Bunge Corp.; Louis Dreyfus Corp.; and Garnac Grain Co. Two additional firms, namely, Archer Daniels Midland Co. and Con Agra, Inc. would probably be added to this list today.

But, more firms participate in the U.S. grain export business than commonly believed. The 1988 Grain Guide listed 61 U.S. grain exporting companies. The number with Japanese names is striking. Some of these firms have acquired U.S. grain marketing facilities including port elevators.

Excess capacity in the U.S. grain export system in 1991 has squeezed marketing margins and intensified competition. It is reported that some grain export elevators are closed and others are for sale. Additional evidence of excess capacity in grain export system is the recent formation of joint ventures between grain exporting companies with the objective of utilizing the export facilities of the individual companies more efficiently. Joint ventures have become increasingly popular in grain marketing and processing. Six joint ventures are identified and described in each of two groups: (a) Joint ventures between farmer-owned cooperatives and (IOF's) such as InTrade,

Inc., and (b) Joint ventures between IOF's such as the Conti/Bunge Export Marketing Group. Joint ventures have advantages as well as disadvantages. How durable these new forms of grain marketing structure will be over time remains to be seen.

Grain storage capacity in the U.S. increased in response to the stock build-up reaching a record 22.9 billion bushels on December 1, 1988. Nearly six out of ten bushels of U.S. grain storage represents farm storage. The precipitous drop in grain stocks as a result of the 1988 drought has resulted in excess grain storage capacity and reduced income from storing and handling grain for the U.S. government. Total U.S. grain storage capacity declined to 21.1 billion bushels on December 1, 1991.

The three largest multi-facility grain companies have also made sizeable investments in value-added grain processing in recent years. Con Agra, Inc., ADM and Cargill, Inc. are now the three largest flour milling companies operating 54 percent of the wheat flour-durum-rye milling capacity in the U.S. None of these firms were even listed among the top 10 flour milling companies in the U.S. in 1968. Con Agra, Inc. and ADM have also acquired a sizeable interest in Canadian flour milling. The flour milling industry has become a growth industry in the past two decades. Per capita consumption of wheat flour increased from 110 lbs. in 1970 to 141 lbs. in 1991 with growth in the fast food industry, expansion in demand for variety breads, and improved consumer perception of the nutrition of wheat based foods.

Harvest States Cooperatives, the nation's largest grain marketing cooperative, has also expanded its value-added grain processing operations in recent years. Its Amber Milling Division, a joint venture with the Miller Milling Company, grinds durum into semolina and now ranks as the nation's second largest durum miller. Pasta consumption in the U.S. has been increasing at a rate even faster than wheat flour.

U.S. flour exports in 1991 accounted for only 6 percent of total flour production. Flour exports may increase in the next few years if more flour exports are subsidized under the EEP as provided for in the 1990 Farm Bill. However, it is difficult to be optimistic about the long-run prospects for flour exports in the absence of government subsidies. The future growth of the U.S. flour milling industry will be heavily dependent on the growth in the domestic market.

INTRODUCTION

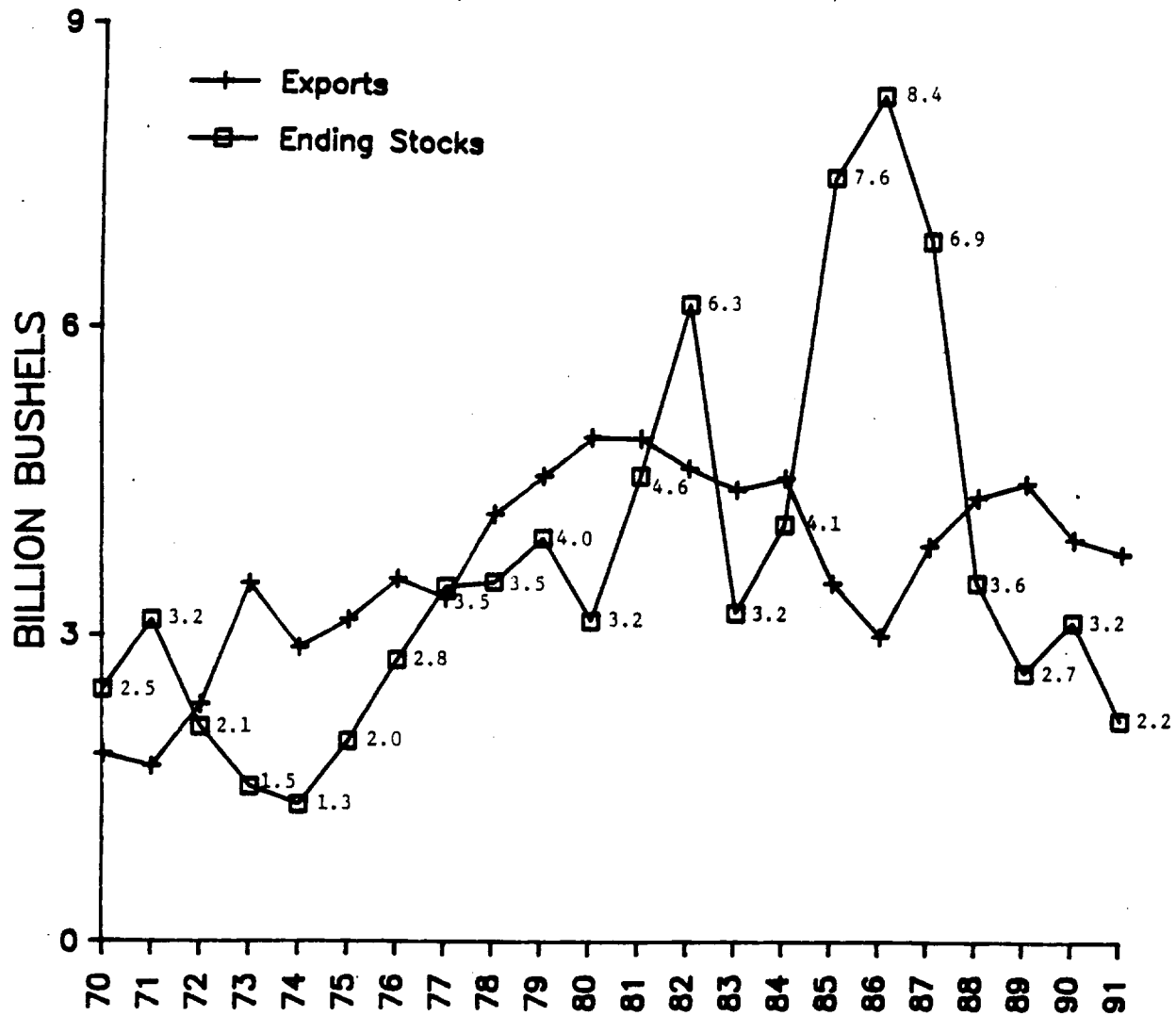
The U.S. grain marketing system is the vehicle through which huge quantities of grain valued at billions of dollars are moved each year from American farms to consumers in this country as well as in foreign lands. Grains and oilseeds form the base of the American food system. The U.S. is also the largest grain exporting country in the world. In fiscal 1991, exports of grains, oilseeds and products totalled \$17.8 billion, 47 percent of total U.S. agricultural exports.

Coordination of these large shipments, delivering the correct types and grades of grain when and where they are needed is not an easy task. Yet it is accomplished with a decentralized free-market system in a remarkably efficient manner. The U.S. grain marketing system is a private enterprise system where individual firms own the facilities and reap the rewards as well as the consequences of their own decisions.

Structural changes in the U.S. grain marketing system have been more extensive and far-reaching in recent years than in any time in history. The late 1980's and early 1990's can best be characterized as a period of consolidation and increased concentration in grain marketing. To understand the economics of these changes one has to look at the stimulus to investment in marketing infrastructure resulting from the grain export boom of the 1970's.

The 1970's will go down in history as the golden decade for American agriculture and its grain marketing system. After more than 25 years when surplus stocks and government price support operations dominated grain markets and marketing, the 1972-73 marketing year ushered in a new era. U.S. grain exports more than tripled in the 1970's reaching an all-time record of nearly 5.0 billion bushels in 1980 (Figure 1). The U.S. grain marketing system deserves considerable credit for accommodating this big increase in volume with a minimum of disruptions. But, marketing margins increased as the demand for marketing infrastructure exceeded the available supply. A euphoria prevailed in the industry as a continued rapid growth potential was perceived. This stimulated investments in rail cars, barges, storage, and port facilities

Figure 1: U.S. Grain Exports and Ending Stocks



much of which did not come on line until the 1980's when grain exports began an extended period of decline.

U.S. grain exports declined to 3,017 million bushels in 1986 from their record high of 4,951 million bushels in 1980. Competition for the reduced volume drove marketing margins down. The new investments in rail cars, unit-train grain loading, barges, and port elevators resulted in a surplus of such marketing infrastructure that became burdensome. U.S. grain exports increased to 4,536 million bushels in 1989, but declined to 3,848 million bushels in 1991, 1,103 million bushels below the 1980 record.

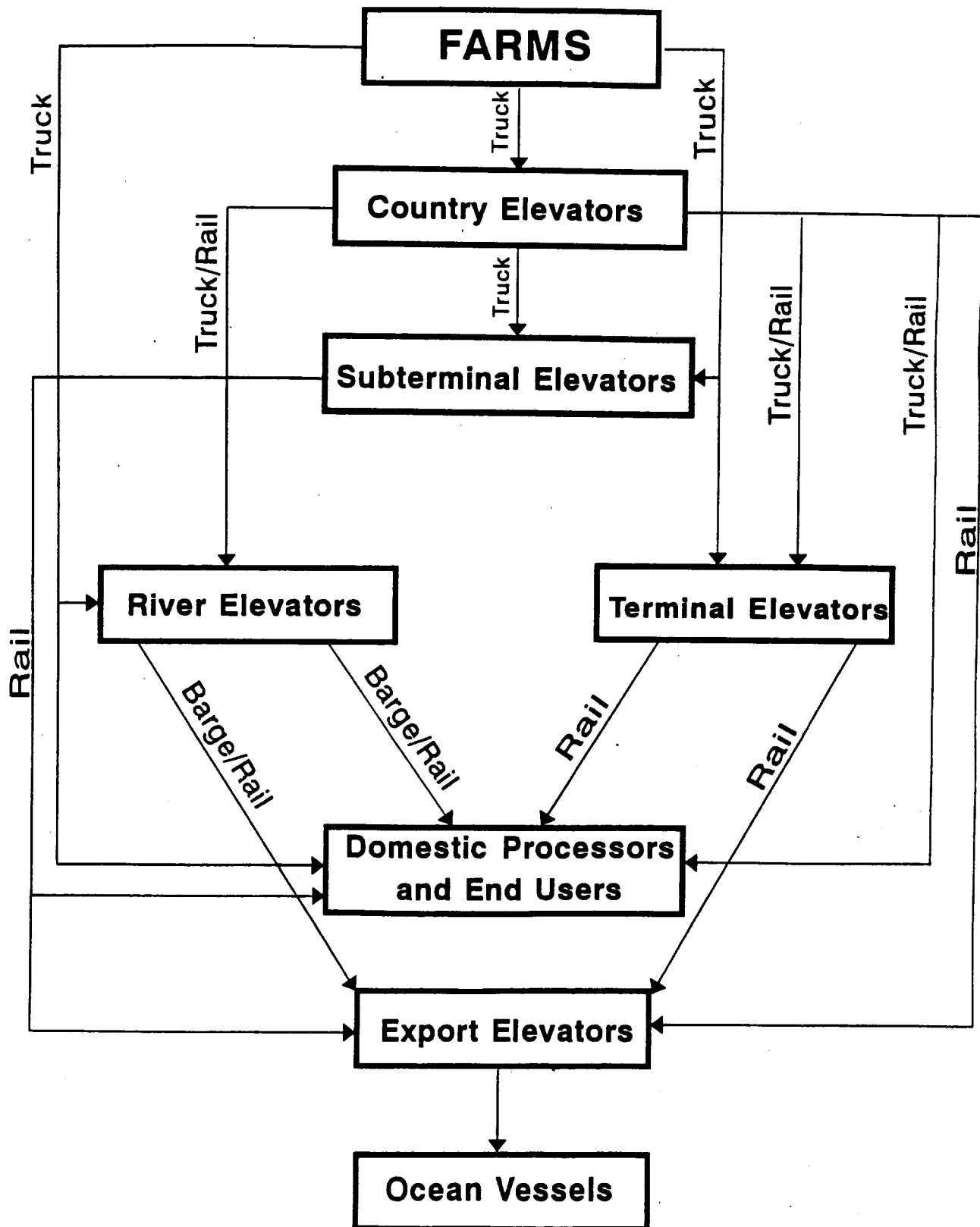
As grain exports declined in the 1980's, carryover grain stocks accumulated under federal farm programs reaching an all-time high of 8.4 billion bushels at the end of the 1986/87 marketing year. But, stocks dropped precipitously following the drought in 1988, reaching 2.2 billion bushels at the end of the 1991/92 marketing year. Carryover grain stocks in the U.S. are now at their lowest level since 1975-76. (Figure 1). This reduced grain storage income in the grain industry which had offset, in part at least, the decline in merchandising income associated with lower grain exports.

The reduction in both grain exports and grain stocks as described above has resulted in excess capacity and reduced marketing margins in the grain marketing industry. These along with other changes such as railroad deregulation and government programs have induced many structural adjustments. The purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze these structural changes in the grain industry along with their performance implications.

GRAIN MARKETING CHANNELS

The grain marketing system begins at the local level with the country elevator. Country elevators have traditionally performed three important economic functions: 1) grain assembly, 2) grain storage, and 3) merchandising farm supplies and services. In some areas, large producers by-pass the country elevator and sell directly to sub-terminal elevators, terminal elevators, or grain processors, but the country elevator is still the primary link in the marketing system for most U.S. grain producers (Figure 2). Country elevators have become larger in recent years as local grain marketing

Figure 2. Grain Marketing and Distribution Channels



cooperatives (farmers' elevators) have merged to achieve lower costs associated with larger volumes. Other smaller country elevators have gone out of business. Fewer country elevators are needed today with improvements in transportation. The grain transportation system consists of trucks, railroads, and barges on inland waterways. Changes in transportation costs as impacted by intermodal competition and railroad deregulation over the past two decades have been important factors inducing structural changes in the U.S. grain marketing system.

Unit Train Rates Change Structure of Country Elevators

Country elevators were first organized to perform the grain assembly function. They bought grain from surrounding farms and assembled it in quantities large enough to ship to terminal markets in single rail cars. Railroads remained the dominant mode of grain transportation until trucks came into heavy usage after World War II when a series of rail rate increases and the development of the interstate highway system made trucks highly competitive, particularly on short hauls. Country elevators began shipping large quantities of grain to terminal markets, particularly to river elevators, by truck. Grain transport by river barge also came into heavy usage at this time. Truck and barge transportation of grain dove-tailed well together. Both took sizeable volumes of grain business away from the railroads.

The railroads responded to increased truck-barge competition by offering special multi-car (unit train) rates on shipments of 25, 50, 75 or more cars. Unit train rates spread rapidly as railroads were given more flexibility in rate-making under de-regulation. Unit train rates were considerably lower than single car rates and provided a powerful incentive for country elevators to modernize their load-out facilities to take advantage of these lower rates. Unit train rail rates also stimulated the investment in new sub-terminal elevators in the country specifically designed to receive grain from other elevators, and sometimes directly from farmers, and ship it out in unit trains. Unit train shipping country elevators and new sub-terminal, elevators spread rapidly in the 1970's. Investments were facilitated by record earnings

from grain merchandising during this period providing equity capital for improvements.

A North Dakota study reported that by 1984 there were 544 unit train rail loading facilities, over half of which were farmer-owned cooperatives, in the four state area of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and North Dakota. This represented considerable excess grain loading capacity in all of these states, particularly in Iowa, that had 5.83 bushels of unit train loading capacity for every bushel of grain shipped out of the state by rail or truck (Cobia, Wilson, Gunn, and Coon).

Excess capacity in unit train shipping facilities at the country end of the marketing system squeezed grain merchandising margins. A study by Ginder concluded that 20 percent of the local grain marketing cooperatives in the Eighth Farm Credit District were in a financially stressed condition in late 1984. He cautioned that if these firms are forced to liquidate asset markets for grain origination would be depressed.

Reduced income from grain merchandising associated with excess capacity and reduced grain exports in the 1980's was mitigated to some extent by increased storage income as carryover stocks accumulated under government programs. However, the precipitous drop in grain stocks as a result of the 1988 drought has resulted in reduced storage income. Excess capacity in both grain storage and merchandising continues to be a problem at the country end of the marketing system.

Cash Trade at Grain Exchanges and Terminals Declines

Grain exchanges in terminal markets such as Chicago, Kansas City, and Minneapolis have played an important role in the development of an efficient grain marketing system in the United States. They brought together buyers and sellers for grain trading in a central marketplace. Open and competitive trading improved price discovery mechanisms and market information. This increased competition and broadened the market for the farmers' grain. Futures trading evolved out of cash grain trading at grain exchanges and its importance has increased over the years.

Grain commission merchants played a central role in the marketing of cash grain at grain exchanges for many years. Country elevators would consign

single rail cars of grain with a sample to a commission firm that would display the sample on the trading floor and sell the grain at the highest possible price to a terminal elevator operator, processor, exporter, or other buyer. Commission firms also performed a variety of other services to the country elevator such as financing, hedging, and handling details of transportation in return for their fee. But, buying and selling grain on a sample basis by commission firms has largely been replaced by forward "to arrive" cash contracts between country elevators and grain merchants where price, grade, premiums and discounts for quality, are agreed to in the contract. The consignment method of marketing grain at grain exchanges has virtually disappeared except in a few grains such as malting barley and durum wheat where the grades are only partial indicators of grain quality. Grain commission firms have declined in number. Survivors have changed their operations to become grain merchants assuming title to the grain they handle. As the marketing of cash grain by sample diminished, cash grain trade at smaller exchanges such as Duluth, St. Louis, Omaha, and Toledo declined even more sharply than at the primary futures exchanges at Chicago, Kansas City, and Minneapolis.

Today most cash grain is traded by telephone. Merchants and processors telephone bid prices each day to country elevators, usually for forward delivery. Forward selling enables country elevator to fix the price as they purchase grain from farmers and have time to schedule load-out and shipping without assuming a price risk.

Changes in transportation technology and costs accelerated the decline of cash grain trade at grain exchanges in terminal markets following World War II. First, the increased volume of grain shipped by truck by-passed terminal rail markets and was not traded at grain exchanges whatsoever. Grain was trucked directly to processors or to river elevators for shipment on interior waterways. Second, new multi-car rates offered by the railroads to compete with increased truck-barge competition were point-to-point rates that did not include the transit privilege. Transit was an integral part of the railroad rate structure under which grain could be stopped at intermediate points between origin and final destination for inspection, storage, or processing without additional charge. The thru rate applied under transit billing. As more multi-car rates were offered by the railroads, the transit privilege was

eroded and virtually eliminated. The demise of the transit privilege and deregulation of the railroads as authorized by the Staggers Act of 1980 sharply reduced the flow of grain from country points to grain exchanges in terminal markets for resale.

Decentralization of Cash Grain Trade

Most grain now moves directly from gathering points in the country to domestic users such as flour mills or to export elevators without moving through a terminal market such as Minneapolis, Kansas City, or Chicago for resale. Grain merchants are still located at grain exchanges in these markets, but trading in individual cars, or unit trains, is most likely to occur near origin points in the country rather than by sample on the grain exchange floor (Changing Face of Breadstuffs).

In addition to diminishing the role of grain exchanges in the marketing of cash grain, railroad deregulation has diminished the role of terminal elevators at these markets, particularly, terminal elevators built many years ago to handle rail grain. Many of these elevators are now obsolete for grain merchandising and are suitable only for long-term storage, primarily of government-owned grain.

Cash grain marketing has become more decentralized with subterminal elevators, located in the country and shipping grain in unit trains, taking over the functions formerly held by many older terminal elevators. Subterminals are also likely to replace many country elevators which will continue to decline in number. One analyst projects that country elevators that are still operating 20 years from now will be subterminal elevators (Grain Terminals Must Adopt to New Role).

Decentralization of cash grain marketing also means that terminal cash grain price quotations are not as representative of true cash grain prices as in years past because they are based on a smaller volume of trade. Cash grain prices are now determined more at export locations than at terminal markets. Futures prices have become even more important as a "basis" for pricing cash grain in a marketing system that has become more decentralized.

FUTURES TRADING IN GRAIN REACHES NEW HIGH

Price volatility increased during the grain export boom of the 1970's as grain prices rose and the U.S. government was able to dispose of stocks that had been accumulated in the post World War II period under price support operations. This increased hedging needs which pushed the volume of futures trading in grain to a record high of 39.5 million futures contracts in 1980 (Table 1). Marketing decisions in volatile grain markets emerged as new and complex problems for farmers as well as marketing firms. Agricultural marketing economists directed more of their attention in both teaching and research to futures markets, hedging, and price risk management.

Futures trading in grain and products varies positively with price variability and inversely with government price support loan activity. As grain exports declined in the early 1980's, price volatility was reduced and stocks accumulated under government programs increased. The volume of futures trading in grain declined from its record level of 39.5 million contracts in 1980 to 26.8 million contracts in 1987 reflecting reduced hedging needs associated with lower price variability and the accumulation of grain stocks to record levels under government programs. But, futures trading in grain rebounded in 1988 to reach a new record of 40.9 million contracts as prices and price volatility increased with the drought and the precipitous draw-down in grain stocks. The volume of futures trading has again declined in each of the last two years, but remained at the relatively high level of 38.4 million futures contracts in 1990 (Table 1).

Issues in Futures Market Performance

The declining importance of terminal markets in cash grain trade is particularly relevant to recent questions about the adequacy of deliverable stocks against Chicago Board of Trade wheat, corn, and soybean futures contracts. These questions followed the Chicago Board of Trade emergency action taken in July 1989 that ordered the liquidation of the largest positions in the July 1989 soybean futures contract. This action was necessitated by a number of facts known at that time and later reported in a study by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. First, the open interest

Table 1. Futures Contracts Traded on U.S. Grain Futures Markets, by Commodity, Selected Years

Exchange and Commodity	Contract Unit	Thousands Contracts				
		1973	1980	1987	1988	1990
Chicago Bd. of Trd.						
Wheat	5,000 bu.	1,567	5,428	1,929	3,378	2,876
Corn	5,000 bu.	4,075	11,947	7,253	11,106	11,423
Oats	5,000 bu.	183	321	291	355	434
Soybeans	5,000 bu.	2,743	11,768	7,379	12,497	10,302
Soybean oil	60,000 lb.	1,763	3,168	3,912	4,896	4,658
Soybean meal	100 tons	660	3,219	3,798	5,313	4,905
Total		10,991	35,851	24,562	37,545	34,598
Kansas City Bd. of Trd.						
Wheat	5,000 bu.	346	1,298	971	1,339	1,136
Grain sorghum	5,000 bu.	0	0	0	0	1
Total		346	1,298	971	1,339	1,137
Minneapolis Grain Ex.						
Spring wheat	5,000 bu.	172	334	311	424	477
White wheat	5,000 bu.	0	0	1	*	1
High fructose corn syrup	48,000 lb.	0	0	6	*	0
Oats		0	0	0	2	*
Total		172	334	318	426	478
Mid-America Commodity Ex.						
Wheat	1,000 bu.	75	551	190	294	147
Corn	1,000 bu.	103	441	312	429	455
Oats	1,000 bu.	9	2	7	13	14
Soybeans	1,000 bu.	56	1,053	418	864	1,566
Soybean meal	20 tons	0	0	3	9	5
Total		243	2,047	930	1,609	2,187
Total all markets		11,752	39,530	26,781	40,919	38,400

*Less than 1,000 contracts.

Source: Futures Industry Association.

on July 10, 1989, in the July future was unusually large, over 40 million bushels, and deliverable stocks were very low, less than 13 million bushels, due in large part to the drought of 1988. Second, both the long side of the July contract and the supply of deliverable soybeans were held, in large proportions, by the same trader. Third, the July futures contract was priced more than 40 cents higher than the August future on July 10. The Chicago Board of Trade took the emergency action to assure an orderly liquidation of the July soybean contract to prevent severely distorted July soybean futures prices that could have resulted in contract defaults (Hineman). The impact on this emergency action on the soybean market precipitated widespread controversy.

The National Grain and Feed Association commissioned a study by Peck and Williams of Stanford University entitled "An Evaluation of the Performance of the Chicago Board of Trade Wheat, Corn, and Soybean Futures Contracts During the Delivery Periods from 1964-65 Through 1988-89." The results of this study are significant and worthy of emphasis. First, deliveries against CBOT grain futures contracts are more important than generally believed. "CBOT wheat, corn, and soybean markets have delivery on the order of 10 percent or 20 percent of the peak open interest. Moreover, of these positions still outstanding on the day just before the delivery period, as many as 50 percent are satisfied through actual delivery." Second, there is a significant concentration of positions of the four largest traders with long and short positions at the start of and during the delivery period. This concentration along with the decline in deliverable stocks has reduced the price spread (carrying charge) between the expiring contract month and the next contract month. Third, "basis convergence in Chicago has deteriorated from the 1960's to the 1980's." Deliveries on the three CBOT contracts have been increasing as a percentage of deliverable stocks. This was considered evidence that stocks were too low. The study attributed the low level of deliverable stocks to the decline in terminal markets in cash grain trade. It rejected two proposed solutions to inadequate deliverable stocks, namely, more terminal delivery points and cash settlement. The study suggested a re-evaluation of the delivery of grain in store and allowing for barge delivery or on-track delivery at Gulf export terminals.

An important characteristic of a good futures contract is that its terms, including delivery provisions, reflect the realities of commercial trade. This enables futures contracts to serve as temporary substitutes for later cash contracts on other terms. The realities of commercial trade in wheat, corn, and soybeans do not reflect as much movement through Chicago as was true in years past. Today, the largest share of export movements of wheat, corn, and soybeans is by rail and water to Gulf and Pacific-Northwest ports (Hill and Timmerman). Domestic processors also obtain supplies directly in the country and not through terminal markets such as Chicago.

Changes in Delivery on Chicago Board of Trade Grain Futures

The Chicago Board of Trade announced the following changes in the delivery provisions of its wheat, corn, and soybean futures contracts in the spring of 1992. 1) The addition of St. Louis as a delivery location for soybeans and wheat (St. Louis is already a delivery point for corn), 2) Delivery price differentials at St. Louis are set at premiums to Chicago, 3) Increases in minimum performance standards by delivery warehouses (load-out, load-in rates for rail, barge, and vessels, responsibility for insuring grain, etc.), and 4) Limits to storage rates charged by delivery warehouses. (Ag Contracts Undergo Changes in Delivery.)

U.S. LARGEST MULTIPLE FACILITY GRAIN FIRMS

The 10 largest U.S. grain companies operated 909 grain facilities with aggregate storage capacity of 1,650 million bushels as listed in the 1992 Grain Guide (Table 2). The facilities included 40 port, 127 river, 147 terminal, 123 sub-terminal, and 470 country elevators. The distinction between the latter two types of facilities is often difficult and numbers can vary with interpretation. Cargill, Inc., for example, the nation's largest grain company, lists 179 country elevators and only three sub-terminals. Some of their country elevators would undoubtedly be classified as sub-terminals if the latter is defined as an elevator located in the grain producing area that receives grain from other elevators, and sometimes directly from farmers, and has the capability of loading and shipping the grain in unit trains. Such

Table 2. U.S. Largest Multiple Facility Grain Companies According to Grain Storage Facilities and Capacity 1992

Company	Number of Grain Storage Facilities					Total	Total Capacity
	Port	River	Terminal	Sub-Terminal	Country		
(Ten Largest)					(million bu.)		
1. Cargill, Inc. (total)	15	23	23	3	179	243	378.5
Cargill, Inc. (Grain Div.)	(15)	(22)	(11)	(0)	(179)	(227)	(340.0)
Cargill, Inc. (Flour Mill Div.)	(0)	(1)	(12)	(3)	0	(16)	(38.5)
2. Archer Daniels Midland Co. (total)	2	16	45	28	82	173	324.5
ADM Grain Co.	(2)	(16)	(13)	(28)	(82)	(141)	(285.0)
ADM Milling Co.	0	0	(32)	0	0	(32)	(39.5)
3. Con Agra, Inc. (total)	6	15	18	32	59	130	208.0
Peavey Co. (Subsidiary)	(6)	(12)	(10)	(11)	(59)	(98)	(168.0)
Grain Processing Co.	0	(3)	(8)	(21)	0	(32)	(40.0)
4. Continental Grain Co. ¹	9	25	21	18	9	82	186.0
5. Bunge Corp. ¹	3	40	8	9	0	60	172.8
6. Union Equity Cooperative Exchange	1	1	8	0	0	10	103.1
7. Riceland Foods, Inc.	0	2	3	30	0	35	95.7
8. Harvest States Cooperatives	2	4	2	0	100	108	64.2
9. Scoular Grain Co. ³	0	0	9	2	17	28	60.6
10. General Mills, Inc.	2	1	10	1	26	40	56.6
Ten Largest Total	40	127	147	123	472	909	1,650.0
(Second Ten Largest)							
11. The Anderson's	1	0	4	2	1	8	54.0
12. Lois Dreyfus Corp.	3	9	5	2	7	26	53.0
13. Twomey Co.	0	0	0	0	6	6	50.0
14. Mid-States Terminals, Inc. (Subsidiary of Countrymark, Inc.)	2	1	11	0	0	14	45.5
15. Central Soya Co., Inc. (Division of Gruppo Ferruzzi)	0	1	6	1	0	8	44.8
16. Consolidated Grain & Barge Co.	0	16	1	0	27	44	40.3
17. Garvey International, Inc. (Subsidiary of Garvey Industries)	0	1	1	2	7	11	38.3
18. Foxley Grain Co. (Subsidiary of Foxley Cattle Co.)	0	0	4	7	6	17	35.3
19. Garvey Elevators, Inc.	0	0	4	0	35	39	35.0
20. Demeter, Inc.	0	1	0	6	22	29	33.6
Second Ten Largest Total	6	29	36	20	111	202	429.8
20 Largest Total	46	156	183	143	583	1,111	2,079.8

Source: 1992 Grain Guide, Sosland Publishing Co., Kansas City, MO.

¹Continental Grain Co. operates 27 of the listed elevators under the name of Continental-COF Co. as a part of a joint venture with Ceroilfood (New York) Inc.

²Does not include country elevators.

³Scoular facilities reported to be acquired by joint venture with Continental Grain Co. in 1992.

elevators have increased in both numbers and importance in response to special unit train rates offered by the railroads. This trend will likely continue as more grain moves directly from country gathering points to ports or to domestic processors without moving through terminal markets.

The data in the detail as shown in Table 2 are not available for previous years. The first and second ten largest grain elevator companies in 1981 are shown in Table 3, but country elevators are excluded. Only data for sub-terminal, terminal, river, and port elevators are included in the number of elevators and storage capacity. Nevertheless, one can compare Tables 2 and 3, and note that many changes have occurred.

Cargill was the largest U.S. grain company in 1992 as it was in 1981. Its lead has been challenged in recent years, by the Archer Daniels Midland Co. and Con Agra, Inc. which now rank second and third, respectively. These companies expanded rapidly in the 1980's, in large part through acquisitions. In 1992, the Continental Grain Company ranked as the fourth largest U.S. grain company. But, a new joint venture that Continental formed with Ceroilfood (N.Y.), the U.S. subsidiary of National Cereals, Oils, and Foodstuffs Corp., a state-owned independent agency in China is not listed in Table 2. This new joint venture called Continental-COF Co., will manage 14 elevators that it acquired from Elders Grain Inc. and 22 elevators that previously were operated through the Southwest region of Continental Grain, which is the majority owner of the new venture and managing partner. Elders Grain, Inc., an Australian-owned company formed in 1985, divested its grain business only five years later. (Ceroilfood, Continental Grain in Joint Venture).

Another joint venture in the planning stage in early 1992 involves the Continental Grain Co., New York, and Scoular Grain Co., Omaha. This would form a grain handling and merchandising venture involving present Scoular grain operations. The Scoular facilities reported to be acquired by the new venture are located in Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, and Montana. (Joint ventures prove popular for grain companies in '91.)

The Bunge Corp. ranked as the fifth largest and Union Equity Cooperative Exchange, a regional cooperative headquartered in Enid, Oklahoma, was the sixth largest U.S. multi-facility grain company in 1992. Union Equity reported operating difficulties in 1989 that were attributed by management to increased competition and reduced revenue from grain marketing and storage.

Table 3. U.S. Largest Grain Elevator Companies, 1981.

Company	Number of Elevators ^{1/}	Total Storage Capacity (million bu.)
(Ten Largest)		
1. Cargill, Inc.	21	148.0
2. Far-Mar-Co., Inc.	17	122.1
3. Continental Grain Co.	39	110.3
4. Union Equity Co-op Exchange	3	67.0
5. The Pillsbury Co.	44	54.3
6. Central Soya Co.	9	51.3
7. Bunge Corp.	51	47.0
8. The Andersons	7	43.0
9. Lincoln Grain, Inc.	3	39.3
10. Indiana Grain Division (Indian Farm Bureau Co-op Assn.)	12	38.7
Total	206	721.0
(Second Ten Largest)		
11. Producers Grain Corp.	6	37.9
12. C-G-F Grain Co., Inc.	1	32.0
13. Farmers Union GTA	7	30.0
14. Riceland Foods, Inc.	2	27.3
15. General Mills, Inc.	12	27.2
16. Con Agra, Inc.	16	26.5
17. Louis F. Dreyfus Corp.	9	25.5
18. Garvey Elevators, Inc.	5	24.8
19. Bartlett and Co. Grain	5	20.3
20. Agri-Industries, Inc.	8	20.2
Total	71	271.7
Total Twenty Largest	277	992.7

^{1/} Sub-Terminal, Terminal, River, and Port Elevators.

Source: "Grain Elevator Storage Capacity Grows," Milling and Baking News,
Sosland Publishing Co., Kansas City, MO, Oct. 13, 1981.

It closed some of its facilities in 1991. Union Equity was acquired by Farmland Industries, Inc., Kansas City, in July 1992. Two other regional cooperatives, namely, Riceland Foods, Inc. and Harvest States Cooperatives ranked as the seventh and eighth largest multiple facility grain companies in the U.S. in 1992.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN GRAIN MARKETING COOPERATIVES

The Agricultural Cooperative Service (ACS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported a total of 16 regional grain marketing cooperatives and three interregionals in the U.S. in 1981 with a total grain handle of three billion bushels (Thurston and Cummins). This was their zenith year that also marked the beginning of a decade in which a downsizing of these farmer-owned cooperatives would occur (Dahl).

One interregional grain marketing cooperative (The Farmers Export Company), a federation of regional grain marketing cooperatives organized to market farmers' grain for export, was liquidated in 1985 through the sale of its remaining assets to the Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM). An interregional river barge transportation cooperative (Agri-Trans Corporation) was also re-structured in 1986 when it entered into a joint venture with the American River Transportation Company (ARTCO), a subsidiary of ADM, which is the managing partner of the new joint venture.

Two regional grain marketing cooperatives, the Producers Grain Corporation of Amarillo, Texas, and Far-Mar-Co., of Hutchinson, Kansas, closed their grain marketing operations in the 1980's. Earlier, Far-Mar-Co. had merged with Farmland Industries of Kansas City, becoming a subsidiary of this regional farm supply cooperative. A sizeable share of Far-Mar-Co.'s grain marketing assets were sold to the Union Equity Co-op Exchange of Enid, Oklahoma.

Two well-known regional cooperatives in the cornbelt, GROWMARK, of Bloomington, Illinois and AGRI Industries of Des Moines, Iowa, transferred their grain marketing operations to joint ventures with major multi-national corporations. GROWMARK transferred ownership of its seven river terminals to

a new ADM subsidiary called ADM/GROWMARK in exchange for ADM common stock (GROWMARK and ADM Announce Plans for Joint Venture).

AGRI Industries also formed a joint venture with Cargill, Inc. called AGRI Grain Marketing. With the integration of AGRI's grain merchandising and related functions into the new joint venture, AGRI Industries became a holding company "functioning as a cooperative enterprise in supporting member services and other cooperative programs" (Coonrod).

Two mergers of regional grain marketing cooperatives also occurred during the 1980's. The Grain Terminal Association, St. Paul, MN, and North Pacific Grain Growers, Inc., Portland, OR, merged to form Harvest States Cooperatives on June 1, 1983. The new cooperative, headquartered in St. Paul, MN, became the nation's largest grain marketing cooperative. Harvest States has grain export facilities on the Great Lakes at Duluth Superior and the Pacific Northwest at Kalama, WA. It serves farmers in the Upper Midwest, Pacific Northwest, and adjoining areas.

Ohio Farmers Grain and Supply Association merged with Landmark, Inc. to become Countrymark, Inc. in 1985. Countrymark then purchased the assets of Agra Land, the cooperative that emerged in 1983 from the Chapter 11 bankruptcy of Michigan Farm Bureau Services. Mid-States Terminals, Inc. (the 14th largest multiple facility grain firm in the U.S.) then became a wholly owned grain subsidiary of Countrymark, Inc. (Benschneider).

Effective September 1, 1991, Countrymark, Inc. and the Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association (IFBCA) merged to form Countrymark Cooperative, Inc. Countrymark and IFBCA were federated agricultural supply and grain marketing cooperatives serving farmers in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. Countrymark Cooperative operates two port facilities, two river facilities, one terminal and two sub-terminal elevators with total storage capacity of 32 million bushels.

Finally, Farmland Industries, Inc., Kansas City, a regional farm supply and food marketing cooperative acquired the Union Equity Cooperative Exchange, Enid, Oklahoma, in July 1992. The merger of these two regional cooperatives results in a firm with annual gross revenue of \$4.7 billion. Earlier a proposed merger between Union Equity and Harvest States Cooperatives fell through.

The cooperative grain marketing system today is vastly different from that of a decade earlier when U.S. grain exports peaked. The downsizing of interregional and regional grain marketing cooperatives during the decade was necessitated by heavy investment in grain marketing infrastructure during the grain export boom. Increased competition and reduced marketing margins on the smaller volume of grain exports in the 1980's resulted in reduced revenue and operating difficulties that necessitated structural adjustments.

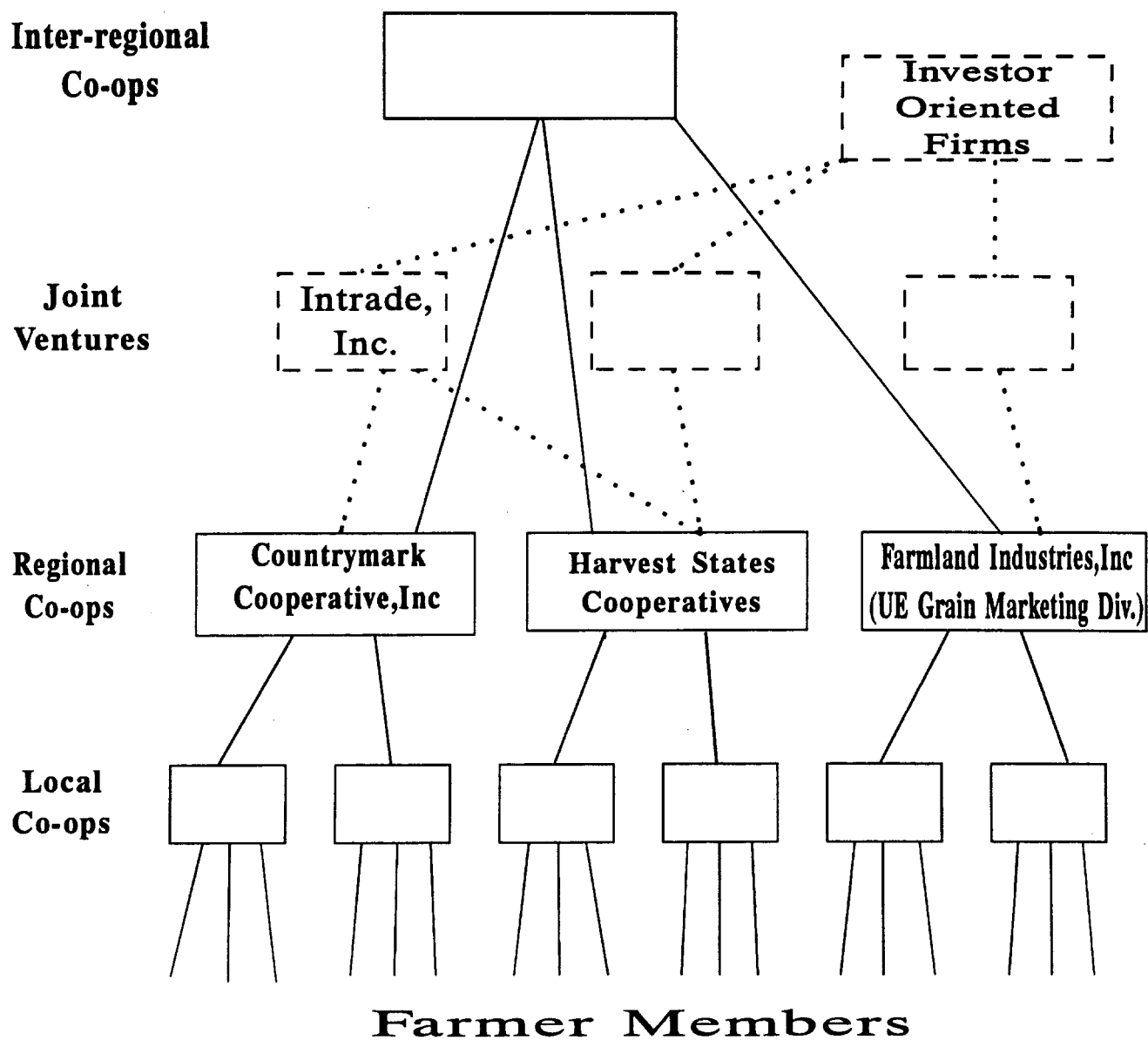
The organization structure of U.S. grain marketing cooperatives is diagramed in Figure 3. The total number of grain marketing cooperatives most of which are local cooperatives, in the U.S. declined from 1,623 in 1985 to 1,400 in 1990 (Richardson, et.al.). Regional cooperatives are federations of locals. Downsizing and consolidation have left four regional cooperatives serving farmers in the nation's principal grain growing areas: 1) Countrymark Cooperative, Inc. in the eastern cornbelt, 2) Harvest States Cooperatives in the upper midwest and pacific northwest, 3) Farmland Industries, Inc. (U.E. Grain Marketing Division) in the southern plains, and 4) Riceland Foods, Inc. in the south central region of the U.S.

Joint ventures between farmer-owned cooperatives and investor-oriented firms (IOF's) are new structural innovations in grain marketing. As explained above, two regional cooperatives in the cornbelt, GROWMARK, Inc. and AGRI Industries, Inc., transferred their grain marketing operations to joint ventures with major multinational corporations. Joint ventures with IOF's have also replaced interregional cooperatives such as Farmers Export Co. and Agri-Trans Corp., both of which were liquidated. The expansion of joint ventures in the United States grain marketing system is analyzed later in this paper.

CHANGES IN U.S. GRAIN EXPORT MARKET STRUCTURE

A major study by Conklin published by the U.S. General Accounting Office in 1982 categorized the market structure of the U.S. grain export system into four groups: (1) major multinational corporations, other than Japanese, (2) Japanese-owned or affiliated firms, (3) farmer-owned cooperatives, and (4) all other exporting firms.

Figure 3. Organization Structure of U.S. Grain Marketing Cooperatives



Major multinational corporations are large firms which operate globally and handle much of the grain that is bought and sold in the world today. The five largest multinationals in 1980-81 were identified as being Cargill, Inc.; Continental Grain Company; Bunge Corp.; Louis Dreyfus Corp.; and Garnac Grain Co., Inc.

Japanese firms are likewise multinational in nature and some are large ones. Trading firms such as Marubeni, Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and C-Itch play an important role in exporting U.S. grain to Japan and other countries. Some of these firms have also acquired U.S. facilities including country elevators, sub-terminals, terminals, and port elevators.

The Japanese National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations (Zen-Noh) also established Zen-Noh Grain Corp., a U.S. subsidiary, which constructed a modern grain export terminal at Covenant, Louisiana, in 1982. Its purpose is to purchase corn, soybeans, and milo from American farmers and ship these grains to Japan (Zen-Noh's U.S. Elevator).

A grain export firm is typically defined as a firm that sells grain directly to a foreign buyer. It does not necessarily have to load the grain on an ocean-going vessel, because this is sometimes done by another company. The 1988 Grain Guide listed 61 U.S. grain exporting companies (Table 4). Included are the large multinationals, referred to above, and other U.S. corporations, cooperative and non-cooperative, well-known in the grain business. But, the number of firms with Japanese names is striking. Other firms listed are not widely known in the U.S. grain business and provide evidence that small as well as large firms can participate in the U.S. grain export business. This is contrary to the popular view that heavy capital requirements are barriers to entry in grain exporting.

Data on changes in U.S. grain export market shares during the decade of the 1980's are not available. However, they would probably show that the share of U.S. grain exports handled by farmer-owned cooperatives has declined. The share of total grain export elevator storage capacity controlled by cooperatives declined from 21 percent in 1981 to 15 percent in 1989 (Table 5). Also, most of this capacity is now located in the Great Lakes, the ports through which the smallest amount of U.S. grain exports flow. Cooperatives no

Table 4. U.S. Grain Exporting Companies, 1988.

<p>AGRIEX, INC.: 7007 College Blvd., Suite 500, Overland Park, Kas. 66211. Phone (913) 345-5400. TLX: 417020. TWX: 9103417658.</p> <p>AGRI-INDUSTRIES: P.O. Box 4867, Des Moines, Iowa 50308. Phone (515) 225-1203.</p> <p>AGRO CO. OF CANADA LTD.: 450 Birdge St., Montreal, Quebec H3K 2C8 Canada. Phone (514) 937-4241. TLX: 05580823.</p> <p>ALLIANCE GRAIN, INC.: Suite 312, 4300 Haddonfield Rd., N.J. 08109. Phone (609) 663-0505. Cable: ALGRAIN. TLX: 834288.</p> <p>THE ANDERSONS: 1200 Dussel Dr., P.O. Box 119, Maumee, Ohio 43537. Phone (419) 893-5050. TWX: 8104492882.</p> <p>ARCHER DANIELS MIDLAND: P.O. Box 1470, Decatur, Ill. 62525. Phone (217) 424-5498. TLX: 250127.</p> <p>ARTIFER, INC.: P.O. Box 53227, New Orleans, La. 70153-3227. Phone (504) 582-2200. TLX: RCA 71-285289.</p> <p>BARTLETT & CO., GRAIN: 4800 Main St., Suite 800, Kansas City, Mo. 64112. Phone (816) 753-6300. TLX: 434021. TWX: 9107712021.</p> <p>SUCCELLATO VACCARO & CO.: (Division of David S. Van Vort, Inc.): 2050 Center Ave., Suite 303, Fort Lee, N.J. 07024. Phone (201) 585-8777. TWX: 7108819727.</p> <p>BUNGE CORP.: One Chase Manhattan Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10005. Phone (212) 943-8800. Cable: BUNGUSA. TLX: 141405.</p> <p>CARGILL, INC.: 15407 McGinty Rd. W., P.O. Box 9300, Minneapolis, Minn. 55440. Phone (612) 475-7575. Cable: CARGILL. TLX: 278170.</p> <p>CENTRAL SOYA CO., INC.: P.O. Box 1400, Fort Wayne, Ind. 46801-1400. Phone (219) 425-9100. TLX: 232410.</p> <p>CHILWICH CORP.: 120 Wall St., 21st floor, New York, N.Y. 10005. Phone (212) 344-3400. TLX: RCA 71-232088.</p> <p>COLUMBIA GRAIN, INC.: 121 S.W. Salmon, Suite 900, Portland, Ore. 97204. Phone (503) 286-8624. TLX: 360592.</p> <p>CONAGRA, INC.: One Central Park Plaza, Omaha, Neb. 68102. Phone (402) 978-4000. TLX: 484558.</p> <p>CONTINENTAL GRAIN CO.: 277 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10172. Phone (212) 207-5100. Cable: FRISBENE. TLX: 125708.</p> <p>COPROSTATES, INC.: 111 Broadway, Room 802, New York, N.Y. 10005. Phone (212) 285-2010. TRT: 177887.</p> <p>EARLY & DANIEL INDUSTRIES, INC.: 525 Carr St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45203. Phone (513) 621-0882. TLX: EARLYDAN CIN 214500.</p> <p>ELDERS GRAIN, INC.: Suite 180, 9200 Indian-Creek Parkway, Overland Park, Kas. 66210. Phone: (913) 451-4400. TLX: 5108001812.</p> <p>FERRUZZI U.S.A.: P.O. Box 53227, New Orleans, La. 70153. Phone (504) 582-2200. TLX: 286288 ARTHOUR.</p> <p>G.B. FOX CO.: 220 Camp St., 4th floor, New Orleans, La. 70130. Phone (504) 588-9211. Cable: FOX. TLX: 58218.</p>	<p>GARMAC GRAIN CO., INC.: 8000 W. 110th St., Overland Park, Kas. 66210. Phone (913) 681-8100. TWX: 9107438844.</p> <p>GENERAL MILLS, INC.: P.O. Box 15003, Commerce Station, Minneapolis, Minn. 55415. Phone (612) 540-2311. TLX: 29-0587 (GENMIL GRN MPS).</p> <p>GULF COAST GRAIN, INC.: 985 Ridge Lake Blvd., Suite 103, Memphis, Tenn. 38119. Phone (901) 685-3750. TLX: 533355.</p> <p>HARVEST STATES COOPERATIVES: P.O. Box 64594, 1887 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul, Minn. 55164. Phone (612) 646-9433. TLX: 297084.</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL MULTIFOODS CORP.: Multifoods Tower, Box 2942, Minneapolis, Minn. 55402. Phone (612) 340-3300. Cable: IMPEX. TLX: 290802.</p> <p>INTERIOR TRADE, INC.: 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10112. Phone (212) 397-3650.</p> <p>INTERSTATE GRAIN CORP.: 1800 W. Loop S., Suite 1550, Houston, Texas. 77027. Phone (713) 871-8908. TLX: 792015.</p> <p>ITALGRAIN U.S.A., INC.: 7900 Van Buren, St. Louis, Mo. 63111. Phone (314) 638-1447. TLX: 8974548.</p> <p>C. ITON & CO. (AMERICA), INC.: 336 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. Phone (212) 818-8000. TWX: 7108815854. TLX: 8188381 or 62.</p> <p>KANEHATSU-GOSHU (U.S.A.) INC.: 1133 Ave. of the Americas, 27th floor, New York, N.Y. 10038. Phone (212) 704-9400. ITT 420288.</p> <p>LINCOLN GRAIN, INC.: P.O. Box 80288, Lincoln, Neb. 68501. Phone (402) 467-4481. TLX: 42-4144 (LWCOLNGR ATCH).</p> <p>LOUIS DREYFUS CORP.: 24 Richmond Hill Ave., P.O. Box 10117, Stamford, Conn. 06904-2117. Phone: (203) 357-8444. Cable: SESOSTRIS. TLX: 986315.</p> <p>MAPLE LEAF MILLS, INC.: 310 Fourth Ave. S., Suite 618, Minneapolis, Minn. 55415. Phone (612) 333-6044. TLX: 290814.</p> <p>MARTRADE LTD.: 788 Grain Exchange Building, Minneapolis, Minn. 55415. Phone (612) 338-8431. Cable: MARTRADE MPS. TRT: 192120.</p> <p>MARUBEN AMERICA CORP.: 200 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10108. Phone (212) 588-3753. TLX: 232185.</p> <p>MITSUBISHI INTERNATIONAL CORP.: 520 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. Phone (212) 605-2570. TLX: 988847. TWX: 7105816782.</p> <p>MITSUBI GRAIN CORP.: 985 Ridge Lake Blvd., Suite 101, Memphis, Tenn. 38119. Phone (901) 685-3700. TLX: 533154.</p> <p>NICHMEN CO.: 1185 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10038. Phone (212) 719-1000.</p> <p>NISHINO IWAJ AMERICAN CORP.: 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10038. Phone (212) 704-6500. TLX: 127090.</p> <p>NOGA COMMODITIES (OVERSEAS), INC.: One World Trade Center, Suite 8041,</p>	<p>New York, N.Y. 10048. Phone (212) 938-8800. TLX: 423238.</p> <p>OVERSEAS COMMODITIES CORP.: 6465 Wayzata Blvd., Park Place West Office Center, Suite 750, Minneapolis, Minn. 55426. (612) 542-1840. TLX: 290158.</p> <p>PEAVEY COMPANY: 730 Second Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. 55402. Phone (612) 370-7558. TLX: 290820.</p> <p>PHILIPP BROTHERS EXPORT CORP.: 1221 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020. Phone (212) 575-5900. Cable: PHIBRO NEWYORK. TWX: 7105815943.</p> <p>THE PILLSBURY CO.: 200 S. Sixth St., Pillsbury Center, Minneapolis, Minn. 55402. Phone (612) 330-9180. TLX: 290688 PILLS MPS.</p> <p>RALSTON PURINA CO.: Checkerboard Square, St. Louis, Mo. 63164. Phone (314) 982-1000. TLX: 447820. TWX: 910781192.</p> <p>JAMES RICHARDSON & SONS LTD.: Grain Division, 25th Floor, One Lombard Place, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y1 Canada. Phone: (204) 934-5823. TLX: 0757708.</p> <p>RICHCO GRAIN LTD.: 650 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019. Phone (212) 903-2000. TLX: 988078.</p> <p>SBS CONTROL SERVICES, INC.: 42 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004. Phone (212) 482-6700. TLX: ITT 428974.</p> <p>SUMITOMO CORP. OF AMERICA: 345 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10154. Phone (212) 207-0700. TLX: 12311 SUMITOMO NYK.</p> <p>TABOR GRAIN CO.: P.O. Box 1470, Decatur, Ill. 62525. Phone (217) 424-5800. Cable: ARDANDEC. TLX: 250127.</p> <p>TIDEWATER GRAIN CO.: 525 Carr St., P.O. Box 145488, Cincinnati, Ohio 45203. Phone (513) 621-0882. Cable: EARLYDAN-CIN. TLX: 214500.</p> <p>ALFRED C. TOEPPER INTERNATIONAL, INC.: 52 Duane St., New York, N.Y. 10007. Phone (212) 788-8100. Cable: ELBHANDEL. TWX: 7105814820.</p> <p>TOHOKU AMERICA, INC.: 551 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10176. Phone (212) 681-5400.</p> <p>TOYOMENKA (AMERICA) INC.: One World Trade Center, Suite 4011, New York, N.Y. 10048. Phone (212) 488-4800.</p> <p>TRADIGRAM, INC.: 1084 Larkin Rd., Suite 25C, P.O. Box 1508, Virginia Beach, Va. 23461. Phone (804) 422-8483. TLX: RCA 288058.</p> <p>UNION EQUITY COOPERATIVE EXCHANGE: 2300 N. 10th, P.O. Box 3408, Enid, Okla. 73702. Phone (405) 233-5100. Cable: UNECO. TLX: 747189.</p> <p>UNITED GRAIN CORP.: 200 Market St., Portland, Ore. 97201. Phone (503) 228-6424.</p> <p>VAN STOLK CO., INC.: 30 Bay St., Staten Island, N.Y. 10301. Phone (718) 448-8113. TLX: 420403.</p> <p>YUASA TRADING CO. (AMERICA) INC.: 42 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004. Phone (212) 288-2884.</p> <p>ZEN-NON AMERICA CORP.: One World Trade Center, Suite 8823, New York, N.Y. 10048. Phone (212) 432-1080.</p>
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Source: 1988 Grain Guide, North American Grain Yearbook, Milling and Baking News, Sosland Publishing Co., p. 23.

Table 5. Percentage of Total Export Elevator Capacity Controlled by Exporter Group, 1981 and 1989.

Exporter Group	1981 ¹	1989 ²
5 Major Multinationals ³	50.3	46.0
Farmer-owned Cooperatives	21.4	15.3
Others ⁴	<u>28.3</u>	<u>38.7</u>
Total	100.0	100.0

¹ Neilson C. Conklin and Reynold P. Dahl "Organization and Pricing Efficiency of the U.S. Grain Export System." Minnesota Agricultural Economist, Agric. Ext. Service, University of Minnesota, No. 635 May 1982, p.3.

² Export Elevator Directory, U.S. Dept. of Agric., Federal Grain Inspection Service, January 1989.

³ Includes Cargill, Continental, Bunge, Dreyfus, and Garnac.

⁴ Includes public elevators and elevators operated by port authorities.

longer control export space at the Mississippi Gulf through which the largest share of grain exports leave the U.S.

The share of port storage capacity held by the five major multinational grain exporting firms also declined from 50 percent to 46 percent during the same period. On the other hand, the share of port capacity held by "other" firms increased from 28 to 39 percent. Two of the largest grain exporting firms in the "other" category include the Archer Daniels Midland Company and Con Agra, Inc. Both have expanded their grain operations in recent years. Today they would probably be classified as major multinational grain exporting companies along with the other five firms listed above.

The GAO study of 1982 concluded that the changing market structure of the U.S. grain export industry in the 1970's was inconsistent with the static make-up one would find in a monopolized industry. New firms, both large and small, have entered the industry, and others have exited, according to the study. The composition and market shares of firms in the industry have also changed significantly during this period, and these structural changes indicated competitive forces at work in the U.S. grain export system.

The above conclusions would likely apply to the U.S. grain export system today as they did a decade ago. In fact, excess capacity in the system today has squeezed marketing margins and intensified competition. The surplus in grain exporting capacity has been estimated at close to 50 percent (Facing Up to Terrible Dilemma in Grain Trade). Another study reported that sixteen of 56 export grain elevators in the United States are closed in 1991, and seven are for sale (Kimle, K. and Hayenga, M.).

Additional evidence of excess capacity in grain export capacity is formation of joint ventures between grain exporting companies. In late 1991, the Con Agra Grain Company and the Ferruzzi Group formed a joint venture to export grain from the Gulf of Mexico called M.F.P. that will combine the gulf export facilities of both companies. (Con Agra Grain, Ferruzzi Group in pact to export grain from Gulf.) In early 1992, the Continental Grain Co., New York, and Bunge Corp., St. Louis, formed a new joint venture called Conti/Bunge Export Marketing Group to export grain through the Louisiana Gulf. The objective of the new group is to utilize the export facilities of the individual companies more efficiently. (Continental, Bunge in venture to export from Louisiana elevators.)

THE DAY OF THE JOINT VENTURE

Several years ago I read a novel entitled, The Day of the Jackal. It later was made into a movie that was very popular. I was reminded of the title of this book as I was writing this paper because it occurred to me that an appropriate sequel might be "The Day of the Joint Venture." Scarcely a week goes by without a report of some new joint venture in grain handling, merchandising, or processing.

A list of joint ventures in grain marketing in existence in mid-1992 is shown in Table 6. No claim is made that the list is all inclusive. These joint ventures have been announced in news releases seen by the author. They are divided into two groups: (a) Joint ventures between farmer-owned cooperatives and investor-oriented firms (IOF's) and, (b) Joint ventures between investor-oriented firms. Six joint ventures are listed in each group.

Table 6. Joint Ventures in Grain Marketing and Processing, 1992.

Name	Participants and Function
A. Joint ventures between cooperatives and investor-oriented firms (IOF's)	
1. Intrade, Inc.	Consortium of 11 German, French, Dutch, Canadian and U.S. cooperatives and the Archer Daniels Midland Company purchased the equity capital of A.C. Toepler International, a multinational grain trading company. Grain export merchandizing.
2. ADM/GROWMARK, Inc.	GROWMARK, a regional farm supply and grain marketing cooperative, Bloomington, IL, and Archer Daniels Midland Co. ADM and GROWMARK terminals on Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. Originate and merchandize grain.
3. AGRI Grain Marketing	AGRI Industries, Inc. a regional grain marketing cooperative, West Des Moines, IA, and Cargill, Inc., Minneapolis. Merchandise grain and oilseeds by truck, barge and rail through six river terminal elevators in Iowa and Illinois.
4. American River Transportation Company (ARTCO)	Agri-Trans Corporation, an interregional cooperative for river barge transportation and the Archer Daniels Midland Co. River transportation of grain and fertilizer.
5. Ag Processing, Inc./ADM	Ag Processing, Inc., an interregional soybean processing cooperative, Omaha, NE, and the Archer Daniels Midland Company purchased 18 feed plants, 26 retail ag. centers and 18 grain elevators from International Multifoods, Inc. Grain and feed merchandising.
6. Amber Milling Company	Harvest States Cooperatives, St. Paul, MN, and Miller Milling Company, Huron, OH, in durum milling. Harvest States is the operating partner and retains the majority interest in the joint venture.
B. Joint ventures between investor-oriented firms.	
1. Continental-COF Co.	Continental Grain Company, New York, and Ceroilfood, New York, the U.S. subsidiary of National Cereals, Oils, and Foodstuffs Corp., a state-owned agency in China. Manages 14 elevators acquired from Elders Grain Inc. and 22 elevators operated through the southwest region of Continental which is the majority owner, July 1990. Grain merchandising.
2. M.F.P.	Con Agra Grain Companies, Omaha, and Ferruzzi Group, New York, form joint venture in late 1991 to export grain from the Gulf of Mexico. The joint venture combines and manages the Gulf grain export facilities of both companies.
3. Conti/Bunge Export Marketing Group	Continental Grain Co., New York, and Bunge Corp., St. Louis, form joint venture in March 1992 to market and export grain through the Louisiana Gulf. Objective is to maximize utilization of Continental's port elevator at Westwego, LA, and Bunge's port elevator at Destrekan, LA.
4. Continental Grain Scoular Grain	Continental Grain Co., New York, and Scoular Grain Co., Omaha, signed letter of intent in early 1992 to form joint venture in grain merchandising. Scoular grain facilities to be acquired by the new venture are located in Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, and Montana.
5. Con Agra, Inc. and Maple Leaf Foods, Inc.	Con Agra, Inc. the largest flour miller in the U.S. and Maple Leaf Foods, Inc., Canada's second largest flour miller, signed letters of intent, March 16, 1992, to form two flour milling joint ventures, one to operate in the U.S. and the other in Canada.
6. ADM/TPC Milling	The Pillsbury Co., a subsidiary of Grand Metropolitan P.L.C., sold 50 percent interest in its four flour mills to Archer Daniels Midland, Co. in March 1992. The 50-50 joint venture will be operated by ADM and supply flour to Pillsbury for its branded family flour and sack bakery flour.

Joint ventures with IOF's enable farmer-owned cooperatives to leverage their equity capital, pool risks, expand markets and obtain advantages of vertical integration. To strengthen their position in international marketing, a consortium of 11 German, French, Dutch, Canadian, and U.S. cooperatives and the Archer Daniels Midland Company formed a joint venture called Intrade, Inc. in the early 1980's. It purchased the equity capital of A.C. Toepfer International, a multinational trading company headquartered in Hamburg, Germany. Intrade is a vehicle through which participating cooperatives along with ADM compete with the large multinational grain trading companies in international markets.

Joint ventures also enable the participants to capture the strengths of each of the participants. When ADM/GROWMARK, Inc. was formed in 1985, the chief executive officer of GROWMARK described the advantages of the joint venture as follows: "ADM needs and wants our systems grain origination capability, and we need ADM's ability to provide equity capital, their processing capability, and worldwide marketing expertise" (GROWMARK and ADM Announce Plans for Joint Venture).

A similar advantage was attributed to a new joint export venture between the Continental Grain Co. and Harvest States Cooperatives announced in August 1992. The new joint venture called TEMCO (Tacoma Export Marketing Co.), "seeks to combine Continental's strengths in international marketing and the capabilities of its 3 million bu. Tacoma, Washington, export terminal with Harvest States' strengths in grain origination and logistical management." (Continental Grain, Harvest States in export venture.)

Other economic advantages have been cited for other joint ventures. In the joint venture called M.F.P. (Con Agra Grain Companies and Ferruzzi Group) for exporting grain from the Gulf of Mexico, it was emphasized that the agreement allows each firm to concentrate on the functions they perform best. Mr. Smith of Ferruzzi said, "Peavey (Con Agra's subsidiary) will be the principal partner in originating and transporting grain to the export point, and Ferruzzi will be the principal partner in supplying its industry with raw material that it needs as well as supplying the world market with U.S. grain." (Con Agra Grain, Ferruzzi Group in pact to export grain from Gulf.)

Joint ventures may also have disadvantages. It remains to be seen whether or not joint ventures between farmer-owned cooperatives and I.O.F.'s

are a threat to the favorable legislative and regulatory treatment under which farmer-owned cooperatives now operate. In the case of joint ventures between I.O.F.'s, problems may arise in connection with the inter-firm pricing of products, cost and profit-sharing. Joint ventures between large firms in concentrated industries may also raise anti-trust questions.

GRAIN STORAGE CAPACITY INCREASES

The first national survey of grain storage facilities in the U.S. was made in 1978. It showed aggregate farm and off-farm storage capacity at nearly 17 billion bushels made up of 10 billion bushels of storage on-farm (59 percent of the total) and 7 billion in off-farm facilities (41 percent of the total). This was equivalent to a full year and one-half of grain production in the U.S. which was about 12 billion bushels per year in 1978 (Table 7).

Table 7. Grain Storage Capacity in the U.S., On-Farm and Off-Farm, by State, April 1, 1978 and December 1, 1991.

State	On-Farm	Off-Farm (commercial)	Total			
	April 1, 1978			On-Farm	Off-Farm (commercial)	Total
	(millions bu.)			December 1, 1991		
				(millions bu.)		
Iowa	1,492	635	2,127	1,800	971	2,771
Illinois	1,154	787	1,941	1,150	1,220	2,370
Minnesota	1,192	368	1,560	1,350	541	1,891
Nebraska	833	488	1,321	1,120	750	1,870
Kansas	370	831	1,201	420	883	1,303
Texas	264	838	1,102	220	939	1,159
North Dakota	691	142	833	850	228	1,078
Indiana	507	283	790	660	362	1,022
Wisconsin	437	130	567	470	185	655
Missouri	347	210	557	410	269	679
Others	<u>2,637</u>	<u>2,275</u>	<u>4,912</u>	<u>3,720</u>	<u>2,565</u>	<u>6,285</u>
Total	9,924	6,987	16,911	12,170	8,913	21,083

Source: Grain Stocks, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA, January 1992.

As grain exports declined in the 1980's, stocks accumulated despite sizeable acreage idled under federal farm programs. Grain stocks reached an all-time high of 8.4 billion bushels at the end of the 1986/87 marketing year (Figure 1). Most of these stocks were stored under government programs such as the farmer-owned reserve, regular price support loan, and CCC ownership.

Grain storage capacity increased in response to the stock build-up reaching a record 22.9 billion bushels on December 1, 1988, an increase of 36 percent from 10 years earlier. The total of on-farm storage capacity of 13.3 billion bushels (58 percent of the total) and off-farm capacity of 9.6 billion bushels (42 percent of the total) reached about two years of U.S. grain production.

The reality, surprising as it might be, that nearly six out of ten bushels of U.S. grain storage capacity represents farm storage, reflects the steady expansion of these facilities in recent years under farm program incentives. Farmers found it advantageous to have farm storage to participate in the regular nine-month farm price support program. The farmer-owned reserve, a three-year loan program provided by Congress in the 1977 Farm Bill, also provided a big boost to new farm storage. Finally, having their own storage gives farmers more flexibility, in grain marketing.

Total grain storage capacity, both on-farm and off-farm, declined in 1989, 1990, and 1991. This was in response to the record decline in U.S. grain stocks as a result of the drought of 1988. Ending U.S. grain stocks declined from their record level of 8.4 billion bushels in 1986/87 to 2.2 billion bushels in 1991/92 (Figure 1). Total U.S. grain storage capacity was 21.1 billion bushels on December 1, 1991, down about 1.8 billion bushels from the record level of 1988.

Eight states now have over one million bushels in total grain storage capacity. Iowa ranks first in grain storage capacity with 2,771 million bushels followed by Illinois, 2,370 million; Minnesota, 1,891 million; Nebraska, 1,870 million; Kansas, 1,303 million; Texas, 1,159 million; North Dakota, 1,078 million; and Indiana, 1,022 million (Table 7).

As grain stocks accumulated in the 1980's under federal farm programs, the grain trade derived more income from storage and handling grain for the government. The income from such operations offset, in part at least, declines in income associated with reduced grain exports and marketing

margins. But, the precipitous drop in grain stocks as a result of the 1988 drought resulted in excess grain storage capacity and reduced storage income for the grain marketing system.

VALUE-ADDED GRAIN PROCESSING EXPANDS

The emergence of excess capacity in grain merchandising in recent years has been accompanied by a greater emphasis in many grain firms on expanding value-added grain processing businesses. Several of the largest multiple facility grain merchandising firms have made sizeable investments in wet corn milling, wheat flour milling, livestock feed manufacturing, meat and poultry processing in the past decade. These investments have come in the form of acquisitions as well as in new plants and equipment. The changing structure of the U.S. flour milling industry is an interesting case in point.

Flour Milling Becomes a Growth Industry

For several decades prior to 1970, the U.S. flour milling industry showed little growth. Declines in per capita consumption of flour were offset by increases in population so total consumption showed only small yearly changes. But, the industry became a growth industry in the past two decades. Flour production increased from 253,094,000 cwts. in 1970 to 373,775,000 cwts. in 1991, an all-time record. This was largely attributable to increased domestic disappearance that rose from 227,351,000 cwts. to 354,971,000 cwts. during the same period. Thus, a reversal came in the long-term decline in the U.S. per capita consumption of flour. From an all-time low of 110 lbs. in the early 1970's, per capita consumption rose to 141 lbs. in 1991. This was the highest since 1950. The increase resulted from many factors including a dramatic growth in the fast food industry or the so-called "bun revolution". Flour consumption was also enhanced by a rapid expansion in the demand for variety breads and improved consumer perception of the nutrition of bread and other flour foods.

Structural Change in Flour Milling

Excess flour milling capacity first appeared in the U.S. industry in the late 1880's and persisted for many years. Overcapacity was particularly burdensome following 1948 when U.S. flour exports declined with postwar world recovery. This precipitated many closures of old, inefficient, and obsolete mills between 1948 and 1953. At the end of World War I there were more than 2,000 flour mills in the U.S. By 1970 the number had dropped to 358 mills with a total capacity of 1,014,427 cwts., including 51,678 cwts. of durum. In 1992, there are 226 mills with a total capacity of 1,354,168 cwts., including 133,595 cwts. of durum. (Milling faces bright outlook.) Capacity expansion has come from increasing the capacity of existing mills and building larger mills. Along with the increase in capacity has come an improvement in flour milling economics as capacity utilization has increased. Milling and Baking News estimated the average rate of milling operations in 1991 was above 90% of capacity based on a six day week.

Many structural changes have occurred in the U.S. flour milling industry in the past two decades. New entrants, well-known as primary handlers and processors of grain and other bulk commodities, have entered the business through acquisition. The nation's three largest flour milling companies in 1991 were Con Agra, Inc., Cargill, Inc., and ADM Milling Company. Collectively, they operate 54 percent of the wheat flour-durum-rye milling capacity in the U.S. (Table 8). None of these firms were even listed among the top 10 flour milling companies in the U.S. in 1968. In the latter year, the largest four flour milling companies were International Milling Co., the Pillsbury Co., Peavy Flour Mills, and General Mills, Inc. (The Changing Face of Breadstuffs). The flour milling operations of International Milling and Peavy Flour Mills were acquired by Con Agra, Inc. General Mills, Inc. and the Pillsbury Co. which had their origins in flour milling, have become large, diversified food marketing and processing companies. Flour milling is no longer a major activity, although General Mills still ranks as the nations fourth largest flour milling company. The Pillsbury Co., now a subsidiary of Grand Metropolitan, P.L.C., has sold all but four of its flour mills, the most recent of which was the sale of four mills to Cargill, Inc. in June 1991.

Table 8. U.S. Largest Wheat Flour-Durum-Rye Milling Companies, 1992.

Company	No. of Mills	Daily Capacity, cwts.	Percent of Total Capacity	Cumulative Percent of Total Capacity
1. Con Agra, Inc.	30	284,600	21.0	21.0
2. Cargill, Inc.	21	225,400	16.6	37.6
3. ADM Milling Co.	26	221,700	16.4	54.0
4. General Mills, Inc.	8	73,000	5.4	59.4
5. Cereal Food Processors	9	69,800	5.2	64.6
6. The Pillsbury Co.	4	69,400	5.1	69.7
7. Bay State Milling Co.	8	55,000	4.1	73.8
8. Ilagrani U.S.A., Inc.	2	29,240	2.2	76.0
9. Nabisco Brands, Inc.	1	28,000	2.1	78.1
10. Amber Milling Co.	2	23,000	1.7	79.8
Others	<u>115</u>	<u>275,028</u>	<u>20.2</u>	100.0
Total U.S.	226	1,354,168	100.0	

Source: Milling Directory and Buyers Guide, 1992, Milling and Baking News.

In March 1992, The Pillsbury Co. announced the sale of a 50% stake in its four remaining flour mills to Archer Daniels Midland Co. The ownership of the four mills in Buffalo, NY; Enid, OK; Minneapolis, and St. Louis shifted to a 50-50 joint venture known as ADM/TPC Milling. The joint venture is operated by ADM and supplies flour to Pillsbury for its branded family flour and sack bakery flour.

It is of interest to note that Con Agra, Inc., Cargill, Inc., and Archer Daniels Midland Co., the three largest flour milling companies in the U.S. are also the three largest multiple facility grain companies in the nation.

U.S. Flour Milling Companies Expand in Canada

Con Agra, Inc., the largest flour miller in the U.S. and Maple Leaf, Inc., Canada's second largest flour miller, signed letters of intent, March 16, 1992, to form two flour milling joint ventures, one to operate in the U.S. and the other in Canada (Con Agra, Maple Leaf plan joint mill ventures in U.S., Canada.) In May 1992, Archer Daniels Midland Co. announced plans to acquire Ogilvie Mills, Ltd., the largest flour milling company in Canada from John

Lobatt, Ltd. Completion of this transaction, subject to regulatory approval, would raise American ownership or substantial interests in Canadian flour milling to 75% to 80% of the country's total flour milling capacity. Earlier in 1991, ADM purchased flour mills in Alberta and Manitoba from Weston Mills, Ltd. (Archer Daniels Midland plans acquisition of Ogilvie Mills).

Structural change in flour milling has been far-reaching, indeed. Increasingly, the industry in the United States and in North America, is dominated by three multinational companies, Con Agra, Inc., Archer Daniels Midland Company, and Cargill, Inc.

Cooperatives Emphasize Value-Added Grain Processing

Harvest States Cooperatives, the nation's largest grain marketing cooperative, downsized its grain marketing operations in the 1980's and expanded its value-added grain processing operations to make it less vulnerable to the ups and downs of the grain business. The Feed Division has been expanded into more products such as pet food manufacturing under private labels for food chains. Harvest States also purchased an investor-oriented firm (I.O.F.) called Holsum Foods that manufactures margarines, salad dressing, peanut butter, and shortening. This is a vertical extension of its Honeymeade Processing Division that produces and refines soybean oil and meal.

The Amber Milling Division of Harvest States Cooperatives that grinds durum into semolina, the chief ingredient of pasta, has also been expanded. Semolina and durum flour consumption in the U.S. in 1990 is estimated at 10.5 lbs. per capita, up 52% from 6.9 lbs. in 1970. Harvest States recently formed a partnership with the Miller Milling Company, an I.O.F., of Huron, Ohio, where its mill was expanded from 6,000 cwt. to 12,000 cwt. per day. Harvest States is the operating partner and retains the majority interest in the partnership. With this expansion, Amber Milling becomes the second largest durum miller in the U.S. grinding about 14 million bushels of durum per year (Division Report of Amber Milling).

Finally, Harvest States Cooperatives and Union Equity Cooperative Exchange recently acquired a combined 10 percent ownership of Cereal Food Processors, the nations fifth largest flour milling company operating nine mills with a daily total capacity of 69,800 cwt. (Table 8). This alliance

will expand the cooperatives' operations in the value-added product sector and enhance the milling company's access to high quality wheat. The presidents of the two cooperatives will be elected to the board of directors of Cereal Foods (Cereal Foods Into Alliance with Two Cooperatives).

Value-added activities such as the manufacture of livestock feed and the promotion of large-scale contractual hog and poultry feeding by their members are also receiving considerable interest by many local grain marketing cooperatives in parts of the cornbelt. Such activities demand a new set of management skills in addition to those required for grain and farm supply merchandising. But, they signify that more country elevators recognize that it may be difficult to survive in the long-run with the narrow margins that currently prevail in the grain business.

Subsidizing Value-Added Agricultural Exports

A provision of the 1990 Farm Bill set a goal of earmarking 25 percent of funds in the Export Enhancement Program (EEP) for promotion of high-value agricultural commodities and value-added food products. For example, subsidizing the export of flour rather than wheat. Most of the funds under the EEP in recent years have been used to aid wheat exports. U.S. flour exports in 1991 declined to 22,267,000 cwts., only 6 percent of total U.S. flour production. The recent high in U.S. flour exports was in 1983 when a special U.S. subsidized sale of 22 million cwts. to Egypt resulted in exports reaching 37,315,000 cwts., the highest level in more than a decade.

The export market for U.S. flour has suffered a long-term secular decline reaching record lows in the 1970's for two reasons. First, flour trade declined relative to wheat as importing countries continued to push for reduced "value-added" imports. Second, flour trade is heavily dependent upon government subsidies. The United States and the European Community (E.C.) make up 75 to 80 percent of all flour exports, most of which are subsidized. The U.S. share of world flour exports has decreased in the last 30 years to 20 percent from 80 percent, while the E.C. share has increased to 65 percent from 16 percent. (Strong Growth Prospects Seen for Trade in High-Value Food Products.)

U.S. exports of flour may increase in the next few years if more flour exports are subsidized under the EEP as provided for in the 1990 Farm Bill. However, it is difficult to be optimistic about the prospects for flour exports in the long run in the absence of government subsidies. Both developed and developing countries find it advantageous to import wheat rather than flour for several reasons. Wheat can be shipped at a lower cost than flour and locally produced millfeeds can usually be marketed more profitably for feeding local livestock. Also, flour milling is not a complex and expensive process. Flour milling technology can be readily adopted by developing countries and is often a first step in industrialization. Hence, most developing countries that consume wheat flour have strong incentives to construct their own flour mills (Farris, Crowder, Dahl, and Thompson).

The future growth of the United States flour milling industry will likely be heavily dependent on growth in the United States domestic market. Growth in the domestic consumption of wheat flour was impressive in the 1980's and some analysts forecast that the forces generating this rapid growth will continue in the 1990's.

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