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*Agricultural Marketing.* By FREDERICK L. THOMSEN. McGraw-Hill Company, Inc. 483 pages. 1951.

*Introduction to Agricultural Prices.* By WARREN C. WAITE and HARRY C. TRELOGAN. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York. 440 pages. 1951.

A GOOD TEXTBOOK is the most reliable tool of a teacher. It often becomes the blueprint for a course, and in many instances the success or failure of a teacher working under the pressures of a heavy teaching load is dependent on the thoroughness of organization and presentation in the text material.

The utter inadequacy of teaching materials in agricultural marketing has caused many prominent teachers to look forward hopefully to the time when satisfactory textbooks in agricultural marketing would become available. For this reason, if no other, I am certain Dr. Thomsen's new book will receive a thorough review by the teaching profession. The basic question is what they will expect of the author. Very few are seeking new marketing ideas. They know such a course is designed as a general course for students from many departments of school of agriculture. Therefore, what is considered good or bad in the book will depend on the answers to the following questions:

1. Is the subject-matter well organized?
2. Does the text cover adequately the subject-matter deemed most essential to informing the students of basic facts and developments in the area of study?
3. Is the material well written for an introductory course, especially does it include a sufficient number of illustrations to clarify obscure ideas and encourage further reading?
4. Does the author deal with controversial subjects in an objective manner or has he chosen to become the advocate of a particular pattern of economic and social thinking?

The essence of the foregoing questions can be summed up by the usual query of a teacher who asks "Is it teachable?"

Dr. Thomsen has done an outstanding job of weaving together a discussion of the marketing system for farm products, how it operates, the tasks to be performed, who performs them, the problems encountered in moving farm products and the title to such products from the farm to

the consumer. He recognizes thoroughly the importance of the consumer in the scheme of things and the degree to which consumer reactions to goods and services and ability to pay mean high prices or low prices on farm products. The subject-matter covered is adequate. The wealth of his experience in marketing research and teaching shows up in the discussions of the Marketing System, Prices and Margins, Potential Improvements in Marketing, and Means of Effective Improvement. His years with the U. S. Department of Agriculture enabled him to draw heavily on the factual and graphic materials of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics to buttress his own ideas. The effective use made of the Bureau's work added greatly to the value of the text.

There is no doubt in my mind about this author's ability to deal objectively with controversial subjects in marketing. This is clearly demonstrated in his treatment of prices and margins, orderly marketing and controlled distribution, and government action to improve marketing. He states "I have tried to be a professional sponge, soaking up as many new concepts as possible through contact with different schools of thought and individuals of extraordinary proficiency in specialized fields." He has succeeded.

THE SECOND BOOK is a revision of the original text published in a limited number by the Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis, in 1948, and reviewed in this magazine in January 1949. The major changes in organization and presentation consisted of expanding and transferring to an appendix the materials on "Methods of Price Analysis." This simple and brief treatment of the tools and techniques for analyzing economic data is an obvious compromise between including such a discussion or leaving it entirely out of the elementary text. Waite and Trelogan have done an excellent job in adapting their material to students interested in an introduction to a broad and complicated field of study.

D. B. DeLoach