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FROZEN FOOD LOCKER PLANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

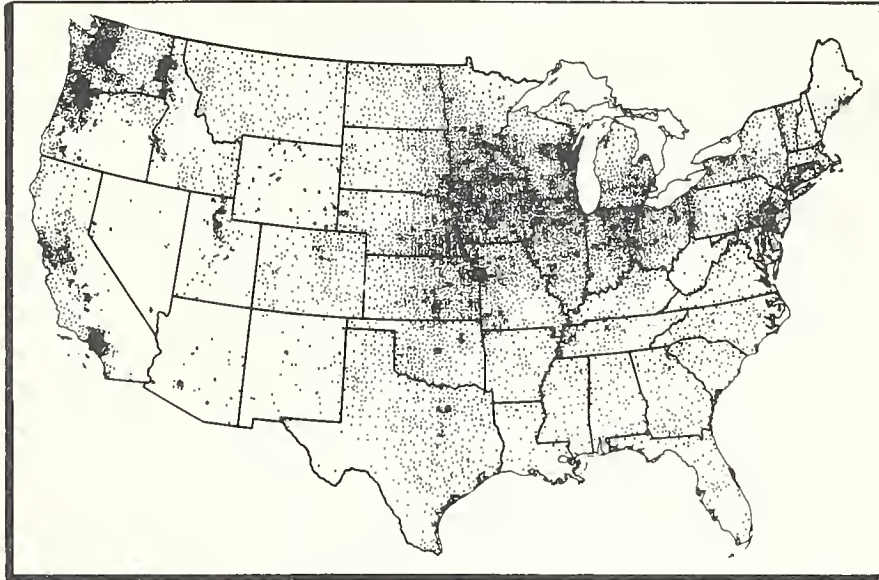
Nineteenth Annual Count, January 1956

By L. B. Mann

Frozen Food Locker Branch

Frozen food locker plants operating in the United States in January 1956 totalled 10,344. In number of plants Iowa led with 772, Washington came second with 668, and Minnesota third with 629. More than half the plants are located in the North Central States and about 15 percent in the Pacific Coast States.

Number of plants has declined about 1,200 since the peak year in 1951. In total, however, the industry has added processing facilities, expanded slaughtering and processing volume, increased volume of food sold, and increased number of patrons served.



Frozen food locker plants in the United States

Frozen food lockers have proved to be one of the major keys to better food storage and better eating in the past two decades, particularly in rural communities. Locker plants are especially valuable in processing, storing and merchandising locally grown foods.

The frozen food locker industry is continuing to change in nature and scope of its activities. For the past 5 years and to some degree since the close of World War II, this industry has been adjusting its operations to take advantage of opportunities arising from the increasing use of home freezers. Indications are that future expansion in the frozen food locker industry will occur in the field of processing and merchandising. While renting lockers will continue as a significant phase of the business, revenue from this service will probably decline in relative importance.

A large share of the plants in this industry can process locally produced farm products and merchandise them in wholesale quantities in localized areas. Such services provide a good example of increased efficiency in the marketing of agricultural products. These plants thus reduce transportation and other marketing costs to the benefit of both producer and consumer.

**PURCHASING DIVISION
FARMER COOPERATIVE SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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Other points favorable to the growth of the industry include the rapidly increasing population, rising consumer income, increasing acceptance of frozen food, and the trend among consumers with home freezers to purchase frozen foods in wholesale quantities.

Locker plant count by States, January 1956

Alabama	62	Maine	19	Ohio	395
Arizona	50	Maryland	42	Oklahoma	225
Arkansas*	93	Massachusetts	28	Oregon	483
California	450	Michigan	338	Pennsylvania	273
Connecticut	50	Minnesota	629	Rhode Island	4
Colorado	199	Mississippi	65	South Carolina	51
Delaware	10	Missouri	442	South Dakota	277
Florida	58	Montana	219	Tennessee	80
Georgia	87	Nebraska	455	Texas	477
Idaho	180	Nevada	16	Utah	131
Illinois	520	New Hampshire	16	Vermont	41
Indiana	316	New Jersey	53	Virginia	66
Iowa	772	New Mexico	56	Washington	668
Kansas	523	New York	225	West Virginia	17
Kentucky	85	North Carolina	97	Wisconsin	621
Louisiana	39	North Dakota	251	Wyoming	90
United States total: 10,344 plants					

*1955 Count (1958 unavailable)

Net zero storage space in locker plants and in homes totalled approximately 135 million cubic feet in January 1956, as compared with an estimated 120 million cubic feet in 1955. This large zero storage space is capable of holding at one time nearly 4 billion pounds of perishable food.

In this new method of food merchandising, locker plants play an important role as processors and merchandisers of frozen food in wholesale quantities to locker and home freezer users.

Number of frozen food locker plants
operating by years, 1938-1956

Year	Total plants	Year	Total plants	Year	Total plants
1938	1,269	1945	6,484	1952	11,427
1939	1,861	1946	8,025	1953	10,954
1940	2,870	1947	9,529	1954	10,854
1941	3,623	1948	10,617	1955	10,553
1942	4,323	1949	11,245	1956	10,344
1943	4,559	1950	11,569		
1944	5,282	1951	11,608		

Note: Appreciation is expressed to officials of State Departments of Agriculture, State Extension Services, and State and national locker associations for their cooperation in providing information.