

MANY CITIES TACKLE LOCAL FOOD PROBLEMS

United States Department of Agriculture Assists Towns in Establishing Public Food Markets

The introduction of the Public market project on the north shore has met with general approval in local households. What the United States department of Agriculture is doing to promote similar projects throughout the country is set forth in the accompanying article from a recent issue of the Weekly News Letter of the department.

That municipalities are tackling their local food problems in a variety of ways, some of them unusual, is evidenced by reports received by the city marketing division of the Bureau of Markets, United States Department of Agriculture.

From establishing curb markets, remodeling, or building retail market houses, efforts of cities have expanded until some are actually selling food supplies, while one city of about 65,000 population is operating a farm and selling produce from it at retail.

How One City Sells Food

Houston, Texas, which has a municipally owned retail market house, has taken over three stalls in the building and is handling fruits and vegetables in competition with its tenants. In order to be fair to other retailers it charges itself with all overhead expenses paid by other dealers, including rent, and also pays wages higher than those paid in other stalls. Reports on 10 weeks' operation of the city-managed stalls show that it is possible to buy and sell produce in competition with local merchants at both a direct and indirect saving to consumers. The experiment is to be enlarged to include food products other than fruits and vegetables and is said to be already serving as a stabilizing influence on prices in that city market. Competing merchants have become interested in the methods of doing business in the city-operated stalls and appear anxious to try out practices that would enable them to lower their prices.

A City Goes Into Farming

Allentown, Pa., has gone into farming on a farm acquired for other purposes which, through changes in municipal plans, was lying idle. Under the direction of one of the city aldermen this farm is producing vegetables and selling them at retail in competition with shipped-in produce. The farm also feeds 1,444 head of hogs on city garbage. Local advocates of the plan now propose to include the use of an old brewery as a storage warehouse for potatoes and other products grown by local farm-

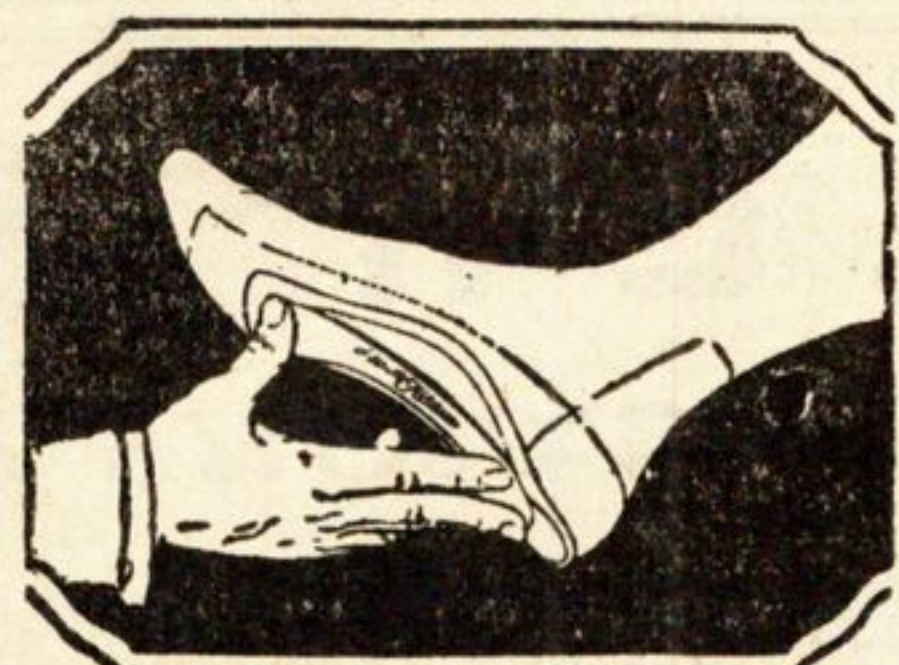
ers, so as to lessen the city's dependence on shipped-in products.

Although the Bureau of Markets, through its city marketing division, is keeping in touch with developments in many cities and is compiling information for use in answering inquiries, it states that it would be glad to hear from any cities, not yet reached by formal inquiries, which are working on local food problems through municipally-owned shops and by other methods differing from those that have been followed in the past. The Bureau plans to make available information in regard to the successes and failures of cities in their efforts to solve their food problems in order that municipalities contemplating special action may have the benefit of the experience of communities faced with similar conditions.

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