

# Cooperative Movement In Agriculture

The 'Green Revolution' has been ushered in during the past three years. It has been made possible through the use of new seeds produced by Agriculture Research Stations and the important role played by Cooperative Societies in Punjab for the supply of fertilizers, pesticides and other inputs to the farmers.

It is basically a revolution of inputs and extension work. The achievements in agriculture production has been so sudden and dramatic that it rose from 3.4 million tonnes in 1965-66 to 6.21 million tonnes in 1968-69. All this was made possible by an efficient distribution of



new seeds, particularly of wheat, use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and assured water supply.

The only agency capable of helping in this tremendous task was the co-operative movement in the State. When the new seeds came to Punjab the co-operative movement was ready for them. About 82 per cent of the farming families had been covered by the cooperatives and almost every village had a viable service society. The total number of village societies in the State was 10,331 with Rs. 14.65 crores as owned funds and Rs. 21 crores as working capital. In order to ensure adequate credit to every farmer for this new wheat revolution crop loan system was introduced in 1967.

The key point in this new system is that the farmer is given credit not in relation to ownership of land but in proportion to the acreage of the particular crop which he is going to sow. With this change of policy every far-

supply of fertilizers for the Punjab farmer the cooperative societies in the State have contributed Rs. 2.50 crores out of Rs. 9 crores of subscribed capital of the country for setting up of an Indian Farmers Fertilizer Corporation at Kandla. In order to continue the increase in production the next break-through must come in the rapid mechanisation of farming operations. Punjabis have already demonstrated their love for machinery. The cooperatives through the land mortgage bank are assisting the farmers in the State in buying tractors and other farming machinery with long term loans. In this endeavour we have had a big success this year by signing an agreement with the World Bank under which approximately Rs. 30 crores will be available to Punjab for importing farming machinery. The Punjab farmer through the Land Mortgage Bank will be buying tractors and harvesting combines. In the next two years 8,000 tractors will be imported and distributed under the scheme. We hope to import at least one hundred combines for the next wheat harvest also.

The co-operative have also turned attention to the Agro-Industries in the State. The canning plant for fruits and vegetables has been set up at Jullundur and an Oil Extraction and Ghee making plant have been set up at Ludhiana. Projects for manufacturing of gun powder and processing of grapes are also under active consideration of the Government.

BY M. S. GILL  
Registrar Co-operative Societies

mer, whether tenant or owner, could get a loan. The loan was made six monthly and given in time for cash of the rabi and kharif crops. The credit limit of an individual member was raised from Rs. one thousand to Rs. 5,000 in order to enable them to buy large quantities of fertilizers and other inputs. To ensure that this money is not spent on non-productive items, the credit was divided into cash and kind components. Approximately half of the credit is given in the shape of fertilizers, pesticides and seeds.

The amount of loans advanced by the cooperative banks in the recent year rose phenomenally. It was Rs. 89 crores in 1967-70 against Rs. 15.97 crores given as short term loan in 1965-66. The fertilizer requirement of these loans also rose in the same manner. It was Rs. 25.94 crores in 1968-69 as against Rs. 11.67 crores in 1966-67. These vast quantities of fertilizers of various kinds were made available all over the State and distributed at the right time for each crop. The State Cooperative Supply and Marketing Federation played a major role in ensuring this supply and distribution of these inputs through 4,000 depots run by village service societies in the State. No farmer had to travel more than a few miles to obtain his supplies.

## Bumper Harvest

For successful raising of new crops an assured supply of irrigation is also necessary. Punjab, though it enjoys a fair amount of canal irrigation, still needs additional sources like tubewells etc. To help the farmer in sinking more tubewells and purchasing other farm machinery the co-operatives, through the State Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank, had played a major role. With their own funds and with the help of Agriculture Refinance Corporation they have carried out a tremendous campaign for the sinking of tubewells. The loans advanced for this purpose have risen from 1.65 crores in 1966-67 to 15.82 crores in 1969-70.

The bumper wheat production in the State which rose from 10.16 lakh tonnes in 1965-66 to 46 lakh tonnes in 1970-71, was bound to result in Marketing and storage problems. To overcome these difficulties the marketed has played a major and vital role. In the last few years they have procured about 8 lakh tonnes on behalf of the State Government. In spite of every effort being made to despatch most of the foodgrains out of the State immediately after the harvesting adequate storage capacity is needed within the State if the foodgrain is to be saved from the damage.

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