



# PERSPECTIVE...

## What Is Marketing and Why?

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**M**ARKETING IS PART and parcel of the modern productive process, the part at the end that gives point and purpose to all that has gone before.

Marketing is getting the product to the consumer.

Wheat that is put in an elevator in Kansas is of no use to the housewife in Atlanta who wants to make rolls for dinner. Cattle on a Texas ranch are not steaks in New York. Cotton at a gin in Alabama is not a dress at a party in Dubuque.

Specialization—the division of labor—itself creates a series of activities in the marketing process. As the process becomes increasingly complex, more and more steps come between the farmer and the buyer. Many-sided questions arise as to the division of supplies among buyers and of returns among those who contribute to the final product; and as to providing guidance to farmers and producers concerning future plans for what, when, and how much.

We have come to accept this specialization without much question even though Americans prided themselves not long ago on being jacks-of-all-trades, personally able to do anything that was necessary. The reason lies in the efficiency of the new way which divides up the tasks as a means to the smooth operation of the new mechanized system.

Some people seem to regard marketing as a merely passive act and the function of the marketing agencies as merely to stand ready to supply demands. But in a growing, dynamic economy, in which competition is the chief coordinator, marketing agencies try always to create new or larger demands for their products. Some uncertainty may result, but that is one of the chief factors in economic growth.

To good salesmen the American market is big, exciting, different. It is up to them to make the most of it, to catch the consumer's attention, to sell. Their efforts lead to advertising and the development of new services and products in an attempt to get a larger part of an established market and to enlarge the total market.

Farmers would like for their products and the products derived from them—food, clothing, industrial materials of many kinds—to get their share of this selling effort. A close tie exists today between farm marketings and the use of chemicals for agriculture, especially as we look ahead.

The future market for fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals used in farming will be very considerably influenced by the extent to which markets for farm products are increased.

The demand for farm products is a derived demand—that is, the demand works backward from the consumer to the retailer to the wholesaler to the processor to the assembler to the farmer. A long chain of agencies or functions intervene between the average farmer and the final users of his products.

Because the demand for farm products is closely keyed to the consumer's dollar, imperfections or disturbances in marketing often fall hardest on the farmer—a tendency reinforced by the fact that many marketing costs are relatively inflexible.

Regardless of the problems and inequalities, though, American farmers and the business agencies which handle, process, and sell their commodities have a strong common interest. (Adapted by Mr. Wells from ideas expressed in his opening article in "The Yearbook of Agriculture," 1954.)