

THE MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE IN CHESHIRE DURING THE 19TH CENTURY¹

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An adequate food supply was a crucial enabling condition in the process of industrial development in 19th-century Britain.² As urban populations expanded rapidly it became necessary—and profitable—for farmers to produce more food than ever before, particularly prior to the commencement of extensive grain and other foodstuff imports from abroad which, especially after about 1870, increasingly dominated the British market. The effects of this expansion in the market for agricultural produce were apparent in many parts of 19th-century Britain, in the form of an increased intensity of cropping and stocking, the development of more elaborate crop rotations, land improvement and increased agricultural rents.³ But, while sources for the study of 19th-century farming *per se* are numerous, there appear to be relatively few records available to indicate the distribution and marketing of this agricultural produce and statistical evidence, in particular, is sparse. The Corn Returns, made from 1789, seem to represent the only national collection of 19th-century agricultural marketing statistics.⁴ Studies of 19th-century agriculture thus tend to make rather generalised references to farming 'for the urban market' leaving their crops and livestock stranded (metaphorically) at the farm gate.⁵ Few attempts have been made to search for evidence regarding the patterns of movement of produce beyond this point, either in the 19th-century or earlier centuries.⁶

In Cheshire there is considerable evidence to show that there were great increases in agricultural production in the 19th-century, brought about as a direct result of the tremendous expansion of markets for agricultural produce in the rapidly expanding industrial centres on the borders of the county, in Merseyside, Manchester and the Potteries.⁷ In this study an attempt is made to piece together a picture of the changing markets for produce and the actual channels of distribution.⁸

SOURCES

Few records of the distribution of produce were kept in the 19th-century by either the farmers themselves or by the intermediaries involved in the process of distribution. Cheshire farmers rarely kept records of any sort and their records of sales were usually vague; occasionally, buyers' names were recorded, but rarely the destination of the produce. Since many of the sales were of cheese to factors, particularly in the first half of the 19th-century, some of whom seem to have been independent and worked for a number of retail firms, it is usually impossible to discover the location of the ultimate consumer. The records of intermediaries in the process of distribution are not much more explicit. Corn Returns are a useful source for produce marketing in the major grain regions, but their value in a dairying county is, of course, limited. Besides, in Cheshire only one town, Chester, made returns. Livestock auction records would provide useful information regarding stock sales but no records appear to be extant for Cheshire farms in the 19th-century.⁹

Some produce, particularly milk, tended to move directly from the producer to the urban markets without passing through any established physical market-place; transport records would seem an obvious source of information for these products but, unfortunately, the railways tended to class milk and other agricultural produce along with general merchandise in their tonnage records. The Minutes of Evidence of opposed railway bills are more informative.¹⁰ Large-scale farmers, cattle dealers and corn factors, among others, seem to have been strongly represented and give some information about the organisation of marketing prior to rail construction, but since liquid milk production tended to follow upon railway construction, little light is thrown upon the distribution of this produce.

Other transport records provide a little more evidence of agricultural produce movements in Cheshire and the quantities involved: the River Weaver tonnage records are particularly good in this respect, for they show the movement of agricultural products up and down river from 1785 and the specific amounts of individual products are indicated up to 1828.¹¹ Finally, contemporary published material, including parliamentary papers, commercial directories and local newspapers, provide occasional information, and the tithe files sometimes give an indication of the destination of produce from particular townships.¹² In total the evidence, and particularly the statistical evidence, is piecemeal. No single source provides full and explicit information about even one type of produce distribution.

MARKETING

Markets, and in particular, methods of marketing, vary considerably according to the nature of the product. Consequently, the distribution of particular products is best discussed individually.

Cheese

At the beginning of the 19th-century cheese was the major product of most Cheshire farms as it had been for some centuries.¹³ Hanshall estimated the annual make in 1823 at about 9,700 tons *per annum*.¹⁴ At this date London probably remained, as it had been for many years, the destination of the majority of the produce. According to Holland the greatest proportion of the cheese, especially of that made on the large dairy farms in the southern and middle parts of the county was sent to the cheese-mongers in London.¹⁵ Farmers generally agreed to ship the cheese either at Chester, whence it was shipped directly to London, or at Frodsham, from which it was sent by way of Liverpool to the same market. Some was sent on the Trent and Mersey Canal to the inland counties, while smaller, less famous dairies, together with a large portion of the cheese made in the north and north-east of Cheshire, was sent to the Stockport and Manchester markets, from which it was distributed throughout south Lancashire and to West Yorkshire.¹⁶ These markets in industrial districts to the north of Cheshire were probably much newer than the London market and it would seem likely that they took the poorer, cheaper makes.

From about mid-century, however, or perhaps earlier, it would seem that the direction of the cheese trade altered gradually, although it is difficult to put a precise date to this change. Individual farm accounts do not specify their markets too closely, but the cheese accounts of John Byram who ran a celebrated dairy at Overpool in Eastham Parish, Wirral, between 1839 and 1871, are unusually explicit regarding the direction of trade. In the early years of Byram's farming career, his cheeses were sent to London, but in 1843 104 cheeses were sold to Wilson & Company of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for a sum of £148. Between 1844 and 1853 northern towns—Bradford, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Stockport, Dewsbury (Yorkshire)—are frequently mentioned in Byram's accounts. From 1854 the cheeses went almost exclusively to Bell's of St John's Market, Liverpool and were presumably sold in the Liverpool district.¹⁷

Increasing orientation to northern markets was probably a common feature of the Cheshire cheese trade from the mid 1840s

on many farms, although it does not appear to be mentioned specifically in published accounts until Driver's survey of 1909.¹⁸ Driver talks of cheese having 'lost hold of the London markets' as a result of competition from imported cheeses, but noted further that Cheshire farmers appeared to have found a more profitable outlet for their cheese in markets nearer home. It was more remunerative to make cheese of a quicker ripening nature than the long-keeping variety favoured in London. Quick-ripening cheese had become popular in the industrial towns of the north. According to Driver, spoilt cheese made on thundery days had been cast aside by the factor as unmarketable in London and farmers began to distribute these cheeses at a low price nearer home; as the taste for them extended into Lancashire, where factory wages were increasing, the price was raised and demand grew. Consequently, an early-ripening cheese was developed in Cheshire and soon spread through the county.¹⁹ This diverted trade from London to Manchester.²⁰

The 19th-century also saw some alteration in cheese marketing methods, although the cheese factor, who had held absolute sway in the early-19th century, continued to handle the majority of cheese trade; even the cheese factories sold their cheese to factors.²¹ The cheese factor had probably been the vital link between the producer and the cheese-monger for some centuries. In the early-19th century he was frequently the agent of a retail company, resident in the county, and bought dairies of cheese on behalf of his company on a commission basis. Usually he travelled round the dairy farms to make his purchases but probably also bought cheese at the cheese fairs held at Chester and Nantwich.²² Many factors were by no means honest and there were numerous cases of bankruptcies and of factors absconding without paying for the cheese they had bargained for.²³ Wedge deplored this 'tyrannical' custom where bargains were often mere verbal contracts and once the price was fixed for a dairy of cheese, the delivery and payments were put off while the cheese was continually diminishing in weight, till it suited the factor to come and weigh it.²⁴ Unfortunately, however, there was no alternative to the visiting factor for the small dairy farmer, particularly in more remote areas. He was generally far too busy to go out and find the factor who would offer him the best bargain.²⁵ Cheese fairs were held only at long intervals and the journey to Chester or Nantwich with cheese was difficult before the building of the railways.

With developments in rail transport, access to the cheese fairs was vastly improved and, in the 1860s, a monthly fair was established at Whitchurch to serve the south-west Cheshire region.²⁶ Previously, farmers from this district had been forced to make the

considerable journey to Chester or Nantwich if they wished to visit a cheese fair. A greater advance came in the 1900s when an alteration in the system of fairs was made, by which they were to be held every week either at Chester, Nantwich or Whitchurch. For the first time farmers were able to send their cheese weekly for public competition in the open market. Not surprisingly the factors threatened to boycott the fairs but were forced to submit.²⁷ The days of the visiting cheese factor were numbered, although not completely finished.

Liquid Milk

From about the mid-1840s milk began to replace cheese as the major product of the Cheshire dairy farmer, for the railway network expanded over the county and the carriage of liquid milk to distant markets became increasingly feasible. Fussell has described the diversion of part of the milk produced to meet the growing demand for liquid milk from the neighbouring towns as the greatest change in Cheshire farming between 1840 and 1880.²⁸ Milk brought in a steady income at short intervals, perhaps weekly, at most monthly, whereas cheese was sold only in one or two lots each year. Moreover, cheese prices fluctuated with the quality of the make and subsequently fell in the face of overseas competition.²⁹ Agricultural labour shortages also favoured milk production.

No date can be affixed to the origin of the market for liquid milk since demand was for long met by dairymen within and in the immediate vicinity of the towns. Many of the suburban producers were probably more akin to the urban cow-keeper than to the true Cheshire dairy farmer.³⁰ To define precisely the expansion of the 'milk-shed' is also difficult since the most celebrated cheesemakers in many districts continued to convert all their milk to cheese, long after their neighbours turned to selling liquid milk; the best quality cheese always obtained a good price.³¹

Palin's appears to be the first published account to mention liquid milk production, along the Bridgewater Canal round Altrincham, where milk was sold to dealers for the supply of Manchester and the surrounding district.³² In 1850 Caird described Littledale's farm near Seacombe, Wallasey, opposite to Liverpool, from which milk was sold in the neighbourhood.³³ The evidence from Palin and Caird would suggest that the milk-shed extended only a little way into the northernmost districts of Cheshire and to the outskirts of the large towns at mid-century. However, evidence from individual tithe files indicates that the milk-shed was possibly beginning to extend rather further by this date. A total of fifteen townships give milk or milk and cheese

as their major produce. The majority of the townships were situated close to their milk markets. Stalybridge, Torkington, Werneth, Disley and Northern Etchells supplied their own expanding urban populations. Matley supplied Hyde with milk, Wincham supplied Northwich, St Mary-on-the-Hill supplied Chester and Brimstage sent milk to Liverpool. More surprisingly, however, Plumley and Pickmere, two townships just north of Northwich, in Great Budworth parish, produced milk for the supply of Manchester in 1844. This traffic is difficult to explain in view of the distance of the two townships from the nearest railway (or canal) connection to Manchester. The Northwich-Manchester line which passed through the townships was not opened until 1863. It cannot, therefore, be viewed as an early example of railway milk, although it would suggest that the demand for milk in Manchester was fast outrunning local supply.

By 1882 when Coleman made his report to the Richmond Commission the area of liquid milk production was expanding rapidly and he begins his report with a description of dairying. Relating how cheese had once been the principal feature of the dairy but 'owing to the proximity to some of the largest centres of population in Lancashire, (it had) of late years to a large extent consisted in the sale of milk,' he attributes this to the great extension of railways throughout the county. Milk selling had developed especially in the northern part of Cheshire where farms situated near railway stations were generally concentrating upon liquid milk production, which proved more directly remunerative than cheese-making, with much less trouble and risk. The expansion of milk-selling was probably a quite recent development in many areas. On the Frodsham and Helsby marshes fronting the Mersey, farms which had all been cheesemakers only a few years before 1882 nearly all sold milk at that date.³⁴

The railway network had expanded considerably since 1860 and there were good facilities into Manchester, Wigan, Warrington, Stockport, Stoke and the Potteries, Chester, Birkenhead and Liverpool. The change to milk probably followed closely on the establishment of a railway line in many districts. By 1915 there were few places in Cheshire without a railway station within four miles.³⁵

In the middle and southern parts of the county in the 1880s cheese-making remained the main business from Easter to November, although in winter months, when supplies were low and milk prices particularly high, milk was sold.³⁶ On many farms in mid-Cheshire the problem of winter keep was probably the major reason for a continuing emphasis upon cheese-making. The milk trade required a uniform supply of milk throughout the

year and, in consequence, much heavier winter feeding than the cheese-maker practised. However, the expansion of root crop growing and the continuing reduction in imported feed costs probably soon induced a change to milk. By 1915 cheese-making was, in the main, restricted to the most isolated south-west corner of the county, the area furthest from Manchester, Liverpool and the Potteries. Whitchurch, over the Shropshire border, was now the major cheese market: yet even from this district, some milk was sent to Liverpool.³⁷

The main market for Cheshire milk throughout the period up to the first World War appears to have been northwards, with Manchester and south Lancashire providing the major markets, but large towns in Cheshire, including Chester, Crewe, Stockport, and Northwich probably also took milk from an increasing distance. The London market does not appear to have taken much Cheshire milk until the beginning of the twentieth century, although in the 1880s some farmers did send milk to London in winter.³⁸ An earlier source indicates that milk was carried to London from the Stockport district in 1860, although the quantities involved are not stated.³⁹ In 1915 Young estimated that about half of Cheshire's liquid milk supply was sent to the Manchester area: of the remainder, about three-fifths went to Liverpool and the Wirral district and two-fifths southwards for London, Birmingham and Wolverhampton. Liverpool obtained over 60% of its milk from Cheshire in 1915—between 10,000 and 11,000 gallons. This came from the Dee Valley, from the Tarpurley district and from the south-western area round Malpas.⁴⁰ The thickly populated district stretching from Liverpool across south Lancashire to Manchester and in the Pottery district of north Staffordshire constituted a milk market which, in importance, was rivalled only by the London district.⁴¹

With the development of liquid milk production came into being a new and, of necessity, highly organised system of marketing. Some farmers carried out the whole process of distribution to the consumer by retailing their own milk daily; smallholders sometimes even took the milk-round themselves rather than pay a delivery man. This was particularly true in the case of the small farmers of Mottram and Stockport parishes in north-east Cheshire, situated close to their market, and probably, to a lesser extent, of farms in Wirral. Coleman cites the example of a farmer at Noctorum who delivered milk retail in his immediate neighbourhood at 16d a gallon, paying a delivery man £1 per week.⁴²

As the milk-shed extended outwards from the towns, however, more links were necessary in the system and farmers who combined milk production with retailing became a very small minority.

The retail dealer and then, in the years just prior to the first World War, the wholesale dealer, became increasingly important.⁴³ Unfortunately, the milk dealers, like the cheese factors, were not among the best payers, and often delayed payment if possible.

Livestock

Livestock sales in Cheshire were largely of calves, pigs, poultry and, to a lesser extent, sheep. Calves, particularly bull calves, were sold off in large numbers from Cheshire dairy farms throughout the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ The majority were probably sent to local fairs and markets to be purchased by butchers, or directly to the butcher in a nearby town, in the first half of the nineteenth century, although Holland mentions that considerable numbers of young cattle were slaughtered in London after being fattened in some of the 'feeding counties'.⁴⁵

One Cheshire farming family who kept a record of their dealings, the Furburs of Austerson in south Cheshire, were selling the great majority of their livestock—calves, sheep and pigs—to local butchers in the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ Vast quantities of calves were apparently sent from the Chester area to Liverpool each week in the 1830s (up to 500 weekly between Easter and October) to be sold to butchers in Liverpool for veal, according to a commercial traveller giving evidence to the House of Lords on the proposed Chester and Birkenhead railway in 1837.⁴⁷ Pigs were sold at about five or six months old, when weighing between about ten and fourteen score, to the Manchester and Birmingham and other markets.⁴⁸ Poultry was probably sold mainly at local markets in the county and at Manchester and Liverpool.⁴⁹

In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, a number of livestock auctions were established in Cheshire, as in other counties, after the repeal of the tax on auction sales in 1845 and the general expansion of the railway system.⁵⁰ These marts probably dealt to a large extent in imported stock; Crewe mart, for instance, established in 1874, was one of the earliest marts to be set up and soon handled great numbers of foreign cattle. In 1882 the Crewe Cattle Market and Abattoir Company Limited was formed with the object of deflecting as much as possible of the Irish and foreign cattle trade from Liverpool and Birkenhead, by making use of the reconstructed Holyhead Old Harbour which had direct railway communications with Crewe.⁵¹ But the marts probably also handled a considerable portion of local livestock produce marketing.⁵² By 1906 there were auctions at Chester, Congleton, Malpas railway station, Northwich and Audlem, the majority of them held at fortnightly intervals.⁵³

Cereals, Potatoes and Market-Garden Produce

Grain was not sold in large quantities, even in the northern mixed farming districts of Cheshire, in the nineteenth century, although it provided a small cash income on many Cheshire farms. Rye, for instance, was grown in the south-east for straw which could be sold in the Potteries district nearby for packing crockery.⁵⁴

At the beginning of the nineteenth century apparently little grain of any kind was sold in the local markets in Cheshire, most of it being sold by sample to the dealers, possibly because of the grain shortage at this period.⁵⁵ In 1823 the principal corn markets were held at Chester, Nantwich, Sandbach, Congleton, Middlewich, Macclesfield and Stockport, but most business was said to be transacted at Four Lane Ends near Tarporley. In most parts of Cheshire, grain was probably sent to the nearest market and consumed in the neighbourhood, though surpluses in north Cheshire were taken to Stockport and Manchester.⁵⁶ Liverpool probably took very little corn from Cheshire, since it was an important importing centre for foreign grain and, indeed, supplied Cheshire with additional grain.⁵⁷

Potatoes were a cash crop of considerable importance to farmers in the mixed farming districts of north Cheshire during the nineteenth century. In 1795 Aikin describes the sale of potatoes from the Frodsham district on the south bank of the River Mersey to Liverpool and Manchester via the River Mersey and Bridgewater Canal, respectively.⁵⁸ In the 1820s, according to Hanshall, the Manchester and Liverpool markets were very largely supplied from the northern parts of Cheshire.⁵⁹ Frost, a corn miller and merchant of Manchester and Chester gave evidence in 1836 that farm carts, laden with potatoes, travelled 20 miles to Manchester from the Northwich and Nantwich areas.⁶⁰ This trade continued through the nineteenth century, though there was some decline in potato growing after 1870.⁶¹ In the 1900s the system of potato marketing was generally that of growers selling direct to the retailer and this system may well have been practised throughout the nineteenth century. At Liverpool, farmers carted in their potatoes and sold to retailers and (to a lesser degree) to wholesalers on particular days of the week. Prices were arrived at by private bargaining.⁶²

The distribution of fruit and vegetable growing was generally on a much more local scale, each large urban centre being surrounded by its own small area of supply. The Wallasey area of Wirral supplied Liverpool, the Sale-Altrincham area supplied Manchester and the Chester parishes supplied Chester. Long distance movements of such perishable products was not generally

attempted, particularly prior to the development of the railway network. Even after the building of the railways, in the late-nineteenth century, market gardening did not extend widely over Cheshire, though within parishes specialising in market garden produce, garden crops occupied an increasing proportion of the cropland.⁶³ Some districts developed specialities; early radishes, for example, from Wallasey were sent to Manchester, and even to Yorkshire.⁶⁴ Considerable quantities of fruit, particularly damsons, were sent to Liverpool from Holt, about 9 miles south of Chester in the Dee Valley in the 1830s prior to the establishment of the Chester and Birkenhead Railway. The fruit was carried at night by carts to Eastham Ferry and then shipped across the Mersey.⁶⁵ In the 1890s cos lettuce was supplied to Manchester from Sale, Timperly, and Northenden in north Cheshire and considerable consignments of lettuce were apparently sent on to London from Manchester.⁶⁶ Finally, with reference to methods of marketing, in the first half of the nineteenth century producers of market garden crops probably generally sold their goods partly to hawkers and partly direct to consumers. By the end of the century, however, market garden produce was usually consigned to salesmen who sold on commission.⁶⁷

MIDDLEMEN AND MARKETS

It is apparent from the above description of marketing that methods of marketing and channels of distribution varied considerably between producers. But, as a generalisation, it may be said that, as the physical distance between producer and consumer increased, a more complex system of distribution was required, and more middlemen recruited to assist in the process of distribution.⁶⁸ Large urban centres outside Cheshire's boundaries, particularly Liverpool and Manchester, took an increasing proportion of Cheshire produce, and even the cheese trade, at one time focused upon the London market, turned northwards in the second half of the nineteenth century. Local produce markets, at the same time, began to lose their significance, in consequence of the orientation to the larger regional markets beyond the county borders, a movement aided by transport developments and, in particular, by the expansion of the railway networks.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the majority of Cheshire farmers were involved in the supply of produce within the local community. Consequently, the local produce markets probably played a very important role in the distribution of farm produce other than cheese. Poultry, calves, pigs, vegetables, hay,

oats and milk were probably often sold at the nearest food market, and Cheshire was quite well supplied with such markets.

Fourteen are listed by Holland, and Audlem market was revived a few years later, in 1817 (Figure 3).⁶⁹ By 1834 there appears to have been an increase to seventeen by the inclusion of Neston and Over.⁷⁰ The market at Over had been revived in the 1820s or '30s and was obsolete once more by the 1850s.⁷¹ Between 1834 and 1848 Frodsham market closed (it had long been in decline) and a market at Birkenhead was established, perhaps the first step to the reorganisation of markets on Merseyside.⁷² From this date changes are more radical. The smaller markets in West Cheshire—Over, Malpas and Tarporley—disappeared and new markets at Crewe, Stalybridge and Hyde, all growing industrial towns, were established.⁷³ The alteration was probably far more than a mere shift in market centres, for while the lost markets had served in the general distribution of agricultural produce, the new markets seem to have been general retail markets in which retailer sold to consumer, rather than the meeting point of farmer, retailer and consumer as in the traditional markets. The change was probably, in large part, a consequence of the developments in rail transport which occurred from the mid-40s and which beckoned the farmer towards the lucrative expanding markets of Liverpool, Manchester and the Potteries. The average dairy farmer no longer had time to visit his local produce market as his herd increased in size and he became involved in daily milk consignments to the local railway station. The processes of marketing were relegated increasingly to middlemen who seem to have expanded both in absolute numbers and in the functions they performed. As Rogers points out, the middleman was 'a necessary part of civilisation (and) . . . essentially the outcome of the modern system of rapid communication.'⁷⁴ By 1900 many of the markets in Cheshire probably depended mainly upon their general retail functions. The fate of the fairs seems to have been similar. At the beginning of the nineteenth century they were numerous but already beginning to fall into decay, according to Holland.⁷⁵ The Spring and Autumn cattle fairs petered out in the second half of the nineteenth century, disappearing altogether in some places, including Altrincham, Malpas and Tintwistle, for instance, and retaining merely an amusement function in others.⁷⁶ The great autumn sales for cattle were no longer necessary as the increased availability of feed allowed herds to be kept at full strength all year round.

The nineteenth century, therefore, saw a considerable change in the distribution of agricultural produce in Cheshire. From the two extremes of the Metropolitan market (for cheese) and the

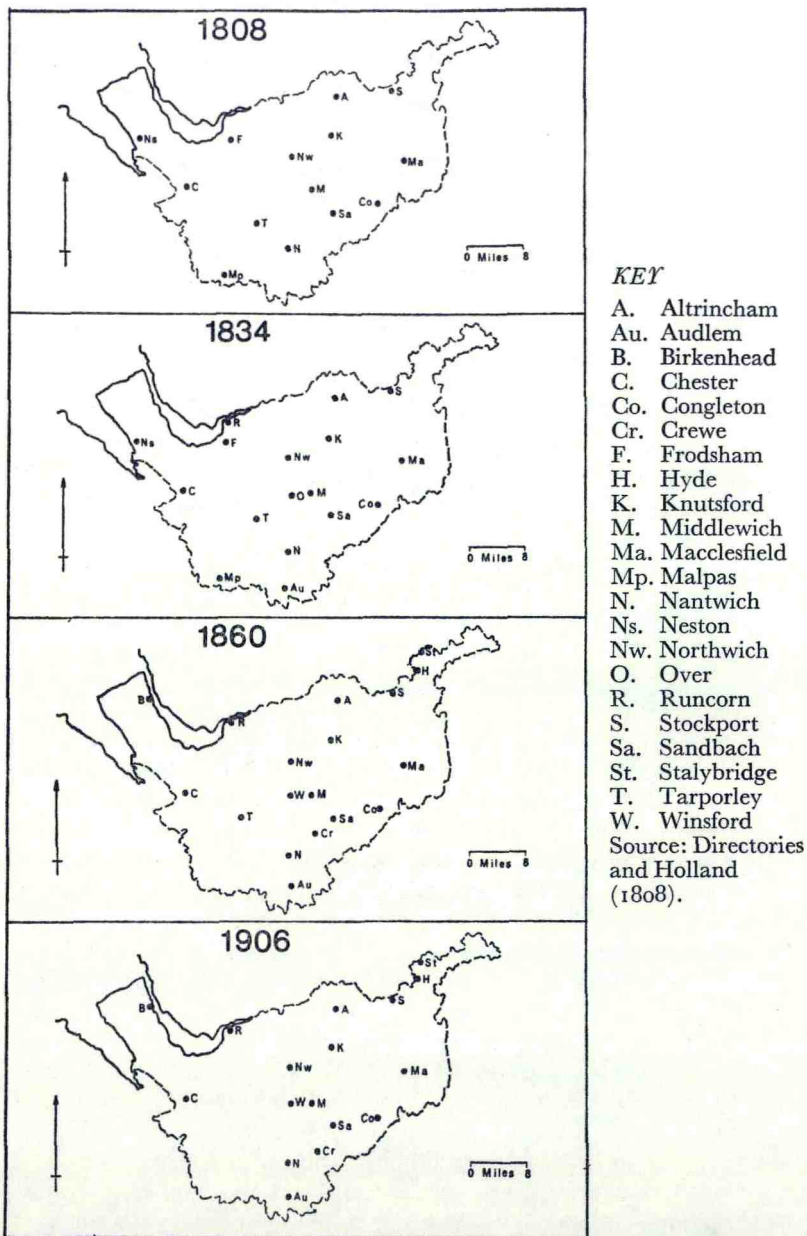


Figure 3 CHESHIRE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKETS, 1808-1906

local produce market, the farmer turned to a market of intermediate order, the large urban industrial centres on the borders of the county. Meanwhile, the farmer was increasingly divorced from the consumer by a growing complexity of intermediate stages in marketing. The middleman became identified as the villain who took away the farmer's profits, but the reaction, co-operative marketing, was largely a post-first World War phenomenon, and not a move which came easily to the independent Cheshire farmer.⁷⁷

NOTES

- 1 I am grateful to Dr D. J. Siddle and Professor R. Lawton of the University of Liverpool for their helpful comments on an earlier draft.
- 2 P. Bairoch, 'Agriculture and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1914' in C. M. Cipolla Ed., *The Fontana Economic History of Europe* 3 (1973), pp. 452-501.
- 3 D. Grigg, *The Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire* (1966); T. W. Fletcher, 'Lancashire livestock farming during the Great Depression'. *Ag. Hist. Rev.* 9 (1961), pp. 17-24; J. T. Coppock, 'Agricultural changes in the Chilterns 1875-1900'. *Ag. Hist. Rev.* 9 (1961), pp. 1-16; D. Thomas, *Agriculture in Wales during the Napoleonic Wars* (1963).
- 4 Public Record Office MAF 10/1-319.
- 5 D. Baker, 'Marketing of corn in the first half of the 18th century: North East Kent'. *Ag. Hist. Rev.* 18 (1970), pp. 126-50. Speaking about the 18th-century Baker writes: "We know much about the management of crops and livestock in the field, little about their journey beyond the farm gate... frequently we seek shelter in some terminological cul-de-sac like 'farming for the market'."
- 6 Exceptions include R. H. Britnell, 'Production for the market on a small 14th-century estate'. *Ec. Hist. Rev.* 2nd ser. 19 (1966) pp. 380-7; A. Everitt, 'The Marketing of agricultural produce' in J. Thirsk (Ed.) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640* (1967), pp. 466-592; E. H. Whetham, 'The London Milk Trade 1860-1900'. *Ec. Hist. Rev.* 2nd ser. 17 (1964), pp. 369-80; Baker, *op. cit.* (1970); Fletcher, *op. cit.* (1961).
- 7 R. E. Porter, 'Agricultural change in Cheshire during the 19th-century' (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Liverpool 1974). Population increases were enormous. For example, in 1801 Manchester township contained c. 17,000 persons. By 1897 Manchester (with Salford) ranked as the second city in the U.K. with a population of 749,000.
- 8 The question of prices is largely ignored. For a discussion of prices see Porter, *op. cit.* (1974), Ch. 7.
- 9 Auctioneers throughout Cheshire were contacted regarding the existence of early records, but without success. In other districts records may be better, though I know of no study, published or unpublished, which utilizes such material.
- 10 House of Lords Record Office, Minutes of Evidence of opposed Railway Bills, c.f. L. Caroe, *Urban Change in East Anglia in the 19th-century*. (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Cambridge 1966).

- 11 Cheshire County Record Office NNW/1-23. Weaver miscellaneous records and tonnage books.
- 12 PRO LR 18.
- 13 G. E. Fussell, 'Four Centuries of Cheshire Farming Systems, 1500-1900'. *T.H.S.L.C.* 106 (1954), pp. 57-78.
- 14 J. H. Hanshall, *The History of the County Palatine of Chester* (1823).
- 15 H. Holland, *General View on the Agriculture of Cheshire* (1808). Defoe describes how in the early 18th-century Cheshire sent 14,000 tons of cheese per year into London and a further 8,000 tons via the River Severn to Bristol, and intervening towns, together with a quantity exported to Ireland and Scotland from Liverpool. Defoe's estimate was probably far too high—c.f. G. E. Fussell, *The English Dairy Farmer 1500-1900* (1966), p. 273. Cheese was, however, certainly sent in large quantities by ship from Chester in the eighteenth century to London. 1,693 tons were sent to London direct between 1740 and 1750, and a further 4,447 tons went by lighter to Parkgate, presumably en route for the city. Other destinations in this period were Highlakes (Hoylake?), Dawpoole, Liverpool, Lisbon and Naples (the latter two via lighter to Dawpoole). A total of 6,449 tons were exported from Chester in the period. (CRO, Q. River Dee Register, 1740-69).
- 16 Holland, *op. cit.* (1808), pp. 315-16.
- 17 CRO DDX 183.
- 18 E. Driver, *Cheshire, its Cheesemakers, their Homes, Landlords and Supporters* (1909), pp. 257-8. In 1837 considerable amounts of cheese were sent to Liverpool for consumption in Lancashire and Yorkshire—House of Lords R.O., Chester and Birkenhead Railway Bill, Minutes of Evidence. H.L. 1837 Vol. 3. Evidence: G. Roberts, grocer and iron-monger of Chester.
- 19 Driver, *op. cit.* (1909), pp. 257-8. This made possible sales of cheeses from farms in smaller lots at more frequent intervals, a trend evident in the accounts of John Byram of Overpool.
- 20 The demand for early-ripening cheese probably encouraged the development of cheese factories where cheese suitable for the northern markets could be made by mass production methods. The American cheese factory had been first introduced in Britain in Derbyshire but by 1882 there were probably 4 factories in operation in Cheshire. At first their success was variable. The great benefit of the factories was to farmers who did not have good cheesemakers. However, once farmers were involved mainly in selling milk, they tended to abandon cheesemaking and preferred to sell the surplus milk to the factories.
- 21 J. Coleman, Assistant Commissioners Report, Northumberland Lancashire and Cheshire (1882), B.P.P. 1882, p. 15, 625.
- 22 Holland, *op. cit.* (1808), pp. 315-16.
- 23 CRO DAR/A/65/2: Letters, petitions, etc. re Cheshire cheese, 1706-1707. Letter 12 gives a list of factors who had absconded in Cheshire in the early 18th century. A number of bankruptcies of cheese factors are recorded in issues of Adams Weekly Courant and the Chester Courant in 1755, 57, 60 and the early 1800s.
- 24 T. Wedge, *General View of the Agriculture of the County Palatine of Chester* (1794), p. 61.
- 25 Some early eighteenth century attempts by farmers to circumvent the factor by marketing cheese themselves are recorded in papers of the Arderne estate:
 "Thos. Emery a Grocer of Liverpoole in Augt. 1706: finding so little offered to his father Thos. Emery of Hapsford near Frodsham in Che-

shire for his Cheese, bought 46 hundred weight of his father and carried it to London to Mr. Sedgwicks an Innkeeper at ye Elephant and Falcon by Aldesgate, and sent for Cheese mongers to buy it, who disparaged it, to bring down the price. Then he caused the Bellman to Cry it to be disposed of, by whole sale . . . and it was all sold in two days . . .

John Rygatt of Brumburow in Wirrall, . . . who carries Goods from Liverpoole to Chester, and holds 2 farms, and his Brother Geo. Rygatt who keeps ye Rockhouse and Ferry Post and holds one farm and their Brother in Law Geo. Robinson a farmer and 2 other farmers near them having been offered too little for cheese and found factors delay payments long after the times they had promised to pay and some to abscond, loaded 5 waggons with ye 24 of May 1706, and set out for London. . . ." (CRO DAR/A/65/23 Letter 3).

- 26 Driver, *op. cit.* (1909), p. 134. The fair was established by Thomas Nunnerly, a farmer on the Cheshire-Shropshire border.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- 28 G. E. Fussell, 'High farming in the West Midland Counties'. *Ec. Geog.* 25 (1949), pp. 159-79.
- 29 E. P. Boon, *The Land of Britain, Part 65, Cheshire* (1941) p. 188. Cheese imports rose from 771,000 cwts, in 1861-5 to 1.3 million cwts. in 1871-5, to 2.1 million cwts. in 1891-5 and 2.36 million cwts. in 1911-13.
- 30 Peter Pownall, a farmer in the Stockport district recorded the date at which he began to sell milk each year from 1786; the date was generally in mid-May. Farm diary, University Library, Reading. CHE-1.
- 31 J. Sheldon, *The Farm and the Dairy* (1889), p. 99.
- 32 W. Palin, 'The Farming of Cheshire'. *J. Roy. Agric. Soc.* 6 (1845), pp. 57-111.
- 33 J. Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850-51* (1852), pp. 260-1.
- 34 Coleman, *op. cit.* (1882), p. 54, 61.
- 35 T. J. Young, 'Dairy Husbandry in Lancashire and Cheshire'. *J. Roy. Agric. Soc.* 76 (1915), pp. 97-110.
- 36 Coleman, *op. cit.* (1882), pp. 54, 69. Milk was sent from a farm at Nantwich to Liverpool at this date.
- 37 Driver, *op. cit.* (1909), p. 134.
- 38 Coleman, *op. cit.* (1882), p. 56. A farmer at Tarporley who sent milk to London is mentioned.
- 39 House of Lords R.O. Stockport and Woodley Junction Railway Bill Minutes of Evidence 1860 H. C. Vol. 4 Evidence: John Hawkshaw.
- 40 Young, *op. cit.* (1915), pp. 105-7. Manchester took the bulk of supply along the North Staffordshire line from the Congleton and Macclesfield districts of east Cheshire, and also by the London and North Western, Crewe to Manchester line, taking up from Chelford, Alderley and Handforth. The Cheshire Lines Railway carried milk from the "higher mid-Cheshire district", Knutsford, Northwich and the Delamere region. A part of the produce from those regions was also sent by direct line to Runcorn, Widnes and St Helens. The area between Stockport and Buxton (Derbyshire) and the Marple district (on the Midland line) also sent milk to Manchester and adjacent towns such as Oldham and Bury. South Cheshire districts close to the Great Western Line also sent some milk to Manchester. In the early 1900s a milk train ran from Crewe to Euston on the L.N.W.R. setting out at 7.40 p.m. each day.
- 41 R. B. Forrester, *The Fluid Milk Market in England and Wales.* (H.M.S.O. Economic Series, 1927).

- 42 Coleman, *op. cit.* (1882), p. 57.
- 43 Departmental Committee on the Distribution and Prices of Agricultural Produce, 1922, Interim Report No. 1—Milk.
- 44 W. B. Mercer, *A Survey of the Agriculture of Cheshire* (1963), p. 88.
- 45 Holland, *op. cit.* (1808), p. 343.
- 46 Farm Diary, CRO DDX 150, DDX 223.
- 47 House of Lords R.O. Chester and Birkenhead Railway Bill. H.L. Vol. 3 Evidence: W. Jenkins. The Eastham Ferry book-keeper, also giving evidence, put the number lower at over 300 calves in a week and an average of 1,600 or 1,700 per annum.
- 48 Palin, *op. cit.* (1845). In the 1920s a large proportion of pigs in south Cheshire, being baconers were sold on the farms to agents of Midland curing firms, but it is difficult to estimate when this practice commenced. Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, *Markets and Fairs in England & Wales*, part 2. Midland markets, (1927), p. 26.
- 49 E. Brown, 'The Marketing of Poultry'. *J. Roy. Agric. Soc.* series 3, 9, (1898), pp. 270-86.
- 50 W. Addison, *English Fairs & Markets* (1953), pp. 184-5. The marts were first introduced about 1836.
- 51 W. H. Chaloner, *The Social & Economic Development of Crewe 1780-1923* (1950), pp. 101-2.
- 52 Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries *op. cit.* (1927), p. 28. The fat and store cattle sold at Crewe in the 1920s came mainly from farms within a radius of 12 miles.
- 53 Kelly, *Directory of Cheshire* (1906).
- 54 T. J. Young, 'Agriculture in the County of Cheshire'. *J. Roy. Agric. Soc.* 85 (1924), pp. 160-75.
- 55 Holland, *op. cit.* (1808), pp. 314-15.
- 56 Chaloner, *op. cit.* (1950) describes how the grain surpluses of farmers in the Crewe district in the mid-nineteenth century flowed to the local corn market through the agency of corn dealers or millers known as "swealers" who called periodically to ascertain whether any foodstuffs were on sale. This may have been quite a common practice in Cheshire although no evidence of it has been discovered elsewhere.
- Hanshall, *op. cit.* (1823), p. 106. The corn market at Tarporley continued to exist in the 1860s but its origins are obscure.
- 57 G. J. S. Broomhall & J. H. Hubback, *Corn Trade Memories, Recent & Remote* (1930). They cite many examples of Cheshire country millers who came to the Liverpool Corn Exchange to buy their corn at the end of the nineteenth century. H.L.R.O. West Cheshire Railway Bill. Minutes of Evidence. H.C. (1861) Vol. 9. Evidence John Hawser, Land Agent: "There is a large quantity of corn which is brought from Liverpool by the Weaver and carted to different places in the neighbourhood".
- 58 Aikin, *op. cit.* (1823), p. 46.
- 59 Hanshall, *op. cit.* (1823), p. 59.
- 60 House of Lords R.O. Manchester and Cheshire Junction railway. Minutes of Evidence. H.L. 1836, Vol. 6.
- 61 This was partly related to the introduction of early potatoes from the Channel Islands and abroad, but also to the increasing incidence of eel-worm, blight and wart disease.
- 62 Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, *Report on the Marketing of Potatoes in England and Wales*. (H.M.S.O. Series, 1926).
- 63 PRO MAF 68. Market gardens were returned from 1874 to 1896.
- 64 P. Sulley, *The Hundred of Wirral* (1889), p. 264.

- 65 House of Lords R. O. Manchester & Cheshire Junction railway. Minutes of Evidence. H.L. 1837 Vol. 3. Evidence: William Jenkins.
- 66 W. E. Bear, 'The Food Supply of Manchester'. *J. Roy. Agric. Soc.* 3rd series 8 (1897), pp. 205-28, 490-515
- 67 R. H. Rew, 'The Middleman in Agriculture'. *J. Roy. Agric. Soc.* 3rd series, 4 (1893), pp. 59-76.
- 68 Rew, *op. cit.* (1893).
- 69 Holland, *op. cit.* (1808), p. 314: Hanshall, *op. cit.* (1823), p. 106. Hanshall duplicates Holland's list except in his inclusion of Neston and exclusion of Halton (Runcorn) which was "long decayed", according to Hanshall. Neston market had probably been in existence at the time of Holland's survey of 1808 but it seems to have had no charter.
- 70 J. Pigot & Co. *National Commercial Directory* (1834).
- 71 F. White & Co. *History, gazetteer and directory of Cheshire...* (1860).
- 72 I. Slater, *Royal National Commercial Directory of the counties of Chester...* (1848).
- 73 Kelly, *op. cit.* (1906).
- 74 A. G. L. Rogers, *The Business Side of Agriculture* (1904).
- 75 Holland, *op. cit.* (1808), p. 313.
- 76 Addison, *op. cit.* (1953), pp. 184-5. Many fairs in England were suppressed towards the end of the nineteenth century because they had lost their commercial function.
- 77 C. R. Fay, *Agricultural Co-operation in Cheshire* (1944).