

HISTORY OF CCOA

A History of California Creamery Operators Association

By Rand F. Herbert

<u>I.Preface</u>	1
<u>II. Setting the Scene: California and the Creamerymen</u> ..	3
<u>III.Founding the Organization</u>	4
<u>IV.CCOA Interests and Activities,1903-1983</u>	7
1.Education	7
2. Quality and Association Standards	13
3. Production and Marketing	22
4. Affiliations with other Dairy Industry Groups.	33
5. Government Relations	36
<u>V.1900 - 1983: A Summary</u>	52
<u>Footnotes</u>	53

Illustrations.

Challenge Company, Los Angeles	title page
Simon Koppes, charter member of California Creamery Operators' Association	5
University of California, Davis, ca. 1910	10
Butter packing laboratory at Davis	10
First Danish Plant, ca. 1895, Fresno	23
The new Danish Plant, Fresno, ca. 1910	23
Changing churn technologies	28
Fred Abbott, Secretary-Treasurer	31
CCOA Directors at State Fair, 1947	31
Sam Greene	40
50th Convention: Greene, Hansen, Koppes	40

I. Preface

California, the largest state in the Union in terms of population, is the nation's largest producer of agricultural goods. California's productive agriculture is world famous; and the state's agricultural industry is also known for its organization. California has been an innovator in the development of cooperatives, use of machinery,

organization of farm labor, and other factors that have led to its growth and productivity. Among these factors were the industry groups organized around specific commodities. In California's dairy products industry, the California Creamery Operators' Association was among the first such organizations, and certainly one of the more influential. It has originated or supported innovations within the industry, backed technical, scientific training for agriculturists, and devoted much energy to public and member education regarding important issues of the day as they relate to dairying. Within the industry the CCOA has endeavored to promote standards of quality and production that benefited both the industry and the public. The organization has also made mistakes — getting involved in an anti-oleomargarine crusade, for example — and has grown through the experience.

An organization like the CCOA, nearing its 85th birthday, is in some ways like a human being. At birth it was relatively small and weak, and gradually thereafter grew and developed, learning from successes and failures, into the mature organization of today. However, an organization like the CCOA continues in life far longer than any one person. The purpose of a review like this is to inform members of the organization's heritage, explore the origins of policies that still affect the membership, and examine the successes and failures of the past in order to emulate or avoid similar occurrences in the future.

The CCOA history project has been underway since the fall of 1982. Its primary sources of information have been the organization's archives as gathered by Fred Abbott, Gene Scaramella, and Bruce Hubbell, added to and expanded by inter-views with long-time, senior members of the association. Moreover, early records of the CCOA, generated between 1900 and 1906, were lost in the great San Francisco earthquake and fire. The story of those years had to be pieced together through examination of old dairy industry journals, periodicals, and other publications. of particular assistance to the author were Bruce Hubbell, Gene Scaramella, James Gomes, Gary Korzmeyer, John J. Fitzpatrick, Robert Osborne, Vernon Halt has been the intent of the project to explore the history of the CCOA; this work does not purport to be a final or complete history of California's

dairy industry, nor does it aver that the CCOA was or is the foremost dairy organization in the state. Hansen, and other members who participated in interviews used in the production of this work.

It has been the intent of the project to explore the history of the CCOA; this work does not purport to be a final or complete history of California's dairy industry, nor does it aver that the CCOA was or is the foremost dairy organization in the state.

[Note: the challenge of any history is to be able to tell the story of a group, person, or event and make it meaningful and understandable to the reader. That has been the aim of this author. Errors and omissions born of ignorance or misconceptions based on the completeness of the CCOA records are unavoidable. The responsibility for those errors is the author's.]

[Back to Top](#)

II. Setting the Scene: California and the Creamerymen, 1900

It is not surprising that the California Creamery Operators' Association was founded in 1900. California, like much of the rest of the nation, was heading into a period of great change. The American economy had grown to great size and produced enormous quantities of goods, and become perhaps the most modern in the world. Cities, already growing throughout the 1800s, became larger, demanding more goods, food, and services. Large companies, large cities, rapid transportation of goods and people throughout the nation — this was the situation in 1900. However, such modernity did not reach to all levels of society. Agricultural activity did not reflect the new efficiency; distribution of goods in the cities and towns was poorly organized, and issues such as sanitation and levels of quality were an individual concern.

The period of 1900 – 1920 in US history is known as the Progressive Era, when reform-minded persons of both political parties organized to meet the many challenges of a new urban society. It was during this period that much of what we think of as commonplace in public policy was begun. The Progressives were, as one historian noted,

afraid of “bigness” — big business on the one hand and big labor on the other -y and used the power of the government to moderate their abuses¹. For example, it was during the Progressive Era that federal anti-trust legislation was strengthened and enforced, regulatory measures like the Pure Food and Drug Act passed, interest in making the growing cities more livable and safe promoted through better sewers, parks, and suburban planning, and more humane attitudes toward juvenile delinquency and the treatment of the insane was supported. The Progressives sought to make American society as modern as the economy. It is not coincidence that an organization like the CCOA might emerge at this time. Creamerymen, faced with new, larger markets and new economic conditions, and with competition from other organized industries both in the marketplace and in the political arena, saw the need to meet the new business environment with an organization of their own. Production of butter, once a cash-producing adjunct of the family farm, developed toward larger scale production to feed urban California. The CCOA was organized to help the creamery industry adjust to, and keep pace with, society’s changing structures.

[Back to Top](#)

III. Founding the organization.

The California Creamery Operators’ Association was founded in December 1900. Unfortunately, the destruction of the records of the organization in the great San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906 has made piecing the story of who actually originated the idea for the association difficult. William Saylor, CCOA’s first “Secretary and Treasurer,” alluded to the origins in his first annual report to the members, published on January 2, 1902:

Lacking but a few days, a year ago, the California Creamery Operators' Association was organized, after having been agitated for several years. While almost all our leading operators of creameries favored, and worked for such an organization, there were those who

doubted the wisdom of undertaking such a step. As
your

Secretary, it pleases me to report at the end of the first year of your existence as an organization, the complete success of your undertaking, and that the interest in the Association, on the part of both members and others in the butter producing business increases instead of diminishing ... our organization has won popularity, not only in our state, but through

the entire country, and I firmly believe is destined to have great weight and influence in matters relating

to the industry with which we are identified.

Up to the present time we have enrolled ninety members, all of who have joined the Association voluntarily.²

The new organization attracted the interest of creamerymen and merchants; in fact, the Dairy and Produce Review noted that the first CCOA convention owed "a great deal to the interest taken by the butter merchants and creamery supply houses of San Francisco, nearly all of the houses being represented."³ At the convention, Professor LeRoy Anderson of the new Dairy School at the University of California presented a paper entitled "Scientific Education of the Creamery Operator," and F.A. Leighton, an instructor at the Iowa Dairy School (and former creameryman) discussed the importance of obtaining quality cream from competent patrons. Others discussed cleanliness, aid to merchants, the value of butter scoring contests as educational tools, helping patrons make their business more profitable, and the effects of bacteria in milk.⁴ Finally, the first convention promulgated nine resolutions. The first five were general or congratulatory, but numbers six through eight dealt with specific organizational goals: to have the State Dairy Bureau be authorized to inspect dairies and creameries to insure purity and wholesomeness; to ask the University of California to establish an appropriate dairy school, with a farm to be used for instruction in animal husbandry of all kinds; and last that the organization urge that Congress pass the Grant Bill, regulating the sale of oleomargarine.⁵

The agenda, description, and minutes of the first annual convention provide a preview of CCOA activities in the years to come. Annual meetings stressed education through technical papers and butter contests. The association worked hard to have the state both regulate the industry through health and sanitation standards and improve the quality of production by education of creamerymen and future creamerymen at the University level. Not least importantly, the CCOA began a long-term fight with oleomargarine, one that lasted well into the 1950s, and has continued to the present in the form of concern over imitation dairy products and substitutes.

The early membership of the CCOA is uncertain. In an early butter scoring contest, held in June, 1901, six months before the first convention, 37 creameries sent entries to be judged. Two were located as far away as Oregon; most were in northern California, almost all (28) from north coastal areas. The Dairy and Produce Review noted that it had been six years since the magazine began urging butter scoring contests. Despite “the new growth of interest” in the contests, “one thing was plainly apparent, and that was the effect these seemingly small and unimportant contests had on the improvement of our butter.”⁶ The winner, J.H. Severin, was a young creameryman, trained in the Wisconsin Dairy School and employed at the Modesto Creamery; he wrote an article for the Dairy and Produce Review on his production techniques. Severin, later a leader in the CCOA, soon after the contest became a “practical instructor” at the Dairy School at Berkeley.⁷

The success of the organization’s first few years can be partially attributed to interest on the part of creamerymen in general, the need for such a body, and the persistence of the organizers and officers. Among these were the CCOA’s president, Henry F. Lyon, William Saylor, Secretary-Treasurer, and the members of the original executive committees and vice-presidents.

Over the next years the organization continued to gradually grow. The approximately 90 members mentioned in 1901 grew to 113 by the annual meeting of 1902. It was noted that at the 1902 meeting there were fewer butter commission merchants and more creamerymen.⁸ The CCOA by 1903 was on firm footing.

[Back to Top](#)

IV. CCOA Interests and Activities, 1903-1983.

The California Creamery Operators' Association has had over the years six general areas of interest upon which it focused its attention and energy. These were:

1. setting standards of quality;
2. setting standards of sanitation;
3. education and research, including by the University of California, of the general membership, and general public;
4. expressing and promoting creamery interests and positions as regards actions by the state and federal government;
5. the production and marketing of dairy products;
6. affiliation and cooperation with other dairy industry groups.

Naturally, it is impossible to keep these activities completely separate, as there were natural interrelationships between areas. For example, education and research would of course effect production; or legislation would have an effect on standards. Because action in these "issue areas" occurred simultaneously, perhaps the clearest means to explore the CCOA's activities is a review of the organization's actions on each, insofar as a separate examination is possible.

1. Education.

Education was (and is) one of the primary interests of the CCOA. As we have seen, papers and demonstrations presented at the first convention were aimed at member education, including suggestions regarding general business practices, and technical or scientific information from university professors. Perhaps most influential were the butter scoring contests, after which the winner was asked to discuss his process. Four such scoring contests were held between 1901 and 1902 besides those at the annual convention.⁹ The CCOA also promoted the idea of a dairy school and university farm. The University of California established a dairy school of sorts at Berkeley in 1901; however, there quickly grew demands that it be moved away from that location. A resolution passed at the 1902 annual convention urged that another site be found — one member

suggested Menlo Park – and in addition, the convention asked for more money for dairy education at California Polytechnical College at San Luis Obispo. The need for dairy education and research was outlined by Professor G.L. McKay, who stated, “the dairy industry is practically in its infancy. We know very little about milk or its production ...”¹⁰ Soon after the convention, “young men” at the University, in the CCOA, and the editors of the Dairy and Produce Review began agitating to move the dairy school out of Berkeley. President of the University of California Benjamin Ide Wheeler attended a meeting of those requesting the move, and stated that if the Regents agreed, he would go along with it.¹¹

Despite these efforts, little was done. The CCOA went on record again in 1903 asking for a separate dairy school,¹² while thanking the University for its educational efforts. The suggestion was rejected in 1903, according to the Dairy and Produce Review, by “those in authority at the University of California” and Governor George Pardee. Later, in October 1904, CCOA members discussed the need to press the state legislature for a separate dairy school.¹² In December, at the annual convention, Sacramento County Judge Peter J. Shields spoke on the need for agricultural education “that would reach the mass of farmers.” Shields, long a supporter of agricultural education, was elected an honorary member of the association at this meeting and remained interested in CCOA activities for many years thereafter. The Dairy and Produce Review described Judge Shields as “an earnest worker for the proposed agricultural farm for the University.” Later in that meeting the members passed a resolution asking the state legislature to appropriate no less than \$250,000 to purchase 640 acres of land and erect necessary buildings for a college farm. The facility, according to the resolution, should be administered so as to “give the state the broadest and most comprehensive education in many lines of agriculture including farm and dairy practice; short courses, special courses and other approved methods which shall give our state a center of education, to which all may come and which shall be purely agricultural .¹³” Shields, because of his efforts on behalf of the University Farm at Davis, has become known as the “father of UCD.” The organization kept up its interest in the founding and funding of a college farm. In December 1905, the annual convention noted that

the last session of the legislature appropriated \$150,000 for the purpose; the CCOA passed a resolution strongly suggesting that the school not remain in Berkeley, that it be at least 500 acres in size, and that construction on the facility should begin immediately.”¹⁴ By the spring of 1906, Davisville was chosen as the site of the University Farm. At that year’s annual meeting Professor E.W. Major reported that the facility was nearly ready to open, but that more money was needed. The CCOA decided to hold its next convention at Davisville, and the Executive Committee, who had worked for the founding of “the Farm” on behalf of the members, attended the signing ceremony of the University Farm Bill, and presented Governor Pardee with a commemorative gold pen to sign his name to the measure.¹⁵

The CCOA held its next annual convention at Davis, November 22, 1907, at which members examined the facilities; and by the next year heard Professor Hopper speak on “the scope and work” of the Farm. Hopper also suggested that the University might issue certificates to dairies “who by their work backed by practical experience have demonstrated their ability along such lines.”¹⁶ A measure of the effect of the dairy industry pressure on the University for the farm can be seen in the fact that the dairy and creamery facilities were the first built on campus, near the present location of Peter J. Shields Library. The long relationship between the University and the CCOA began, then, before 1907. Over the years the school and farm have provided speakers for meetings, contributed to scientific developments regarding dairying and creamery sub-jects; and, through the University Extension program, provided expert advice to patrons and short courses on pertinent topics. University men took part in a series of sectional meetings held around the state in 1923 that discussed dairy and creamery problems such as tuberculosis in milk. During this program of meetings, the extension was asked by the CCOA to produce an educational film on butter making when it was learned that Extension was showing a film on oleomargarine production.¹⁷ Research performed at the University was also a source of interest, and later, concern. Experiments such as those undertaken in 1929-1930 on dry milk and casein production were of great utility to the industry; the CCOA expressed its gratitude for the University’s efforts in exploring the uses to which what was considered “creamery

sewage” might be put in a resolution passed at the annual convention in 1930.¹⁸ Earlier work had include testing to ascertain the protein and vitamin content of milk.¹⁹ Besides scientific work, the association also backed research into agricultural economics. In 1920 Edward Voorhies performed a study of the economics of the dairy industry for the Gianinni Foundation; the officers of the CCOA decided to update this study in 1950.²⁰

After the Second World War the relationship between the CCOA and University underwent a gradual change. The University Farm, as it became a full-fledged campus within the University system, expanded its focus to encompass more than just agricultural concerns. The result was a lessening of the close contact between the campus and the CCOA. The many critics of the “multi-versity” became concerned with close connections between industry and the University, and as the size of the faculty and student body grew, greater emphasis was placed on theoretical research than applied (or “practical”) projects. Some of the meetings in the period between World War II and the 1960s reflected this new emphasis on the scientific. In 1947, as public awareness of the problems of pollution began to grow, the CCOA and University became increasingly interested. The 48th annual convention received a resolution from UCD calling upon the president to name a committee to study the growing problem of water pollution “on behalf of the dairy industry as a whole.”²¹

Other campuses of the University and affiliated laboratories added to the educational efforts of the CCOA. The 1957 annual meeting, reflecting the concerns of a new atomic age, arranged for T.L. Shipman, M.D., of the University of California-Los Alamos Laboratory, to discuss “Milk Production and the Age of Fallout.” The scientists visit was prompted by public worries over radioactive fallout from atomic tests being found in milk. He reflected the common attitude among physicists and doctors at the time, that public reaction was one of “semi-hysteria.” “Frankly,” he remarked, “I cannot get too excited over the claims that bomb tests of themselves are subjecting mankind to a serious danger.”²² The meeting was aimed at meeting two objectives: first, to educate the association membership to the

situation; and second, to help get information out to the public stating another view of a serious problem.

It is not too surprising that member and public education should receive such emphasis. In the 1950s the association charter was altered to place greater stress on member and public educational activities.

A similar conjunction of research, member and public education came soon thereafter, as medical researchers began to discuss a possible link between fats²³ and heart disease. CCOA Secretary-Treasurer Fred Abbott presented a paper in 1958 to the Dairy Press entitled "Dairy People Need Not Apologize for Milk Fat in Their Products" which attempted to explain the facts surrounding the growing furor. He attempted to refute many of the supposed connections between heart disease, cholesterol, and fats."²³ This issue, like that of nuclear contamination, did not go away. The CCOA directors discussed in March, 1965, the fact that physicians were advising patients with heart problems to reduce or eliminate milk fat from their diet, despite lack of support for this view from the American Medical Association or "hard scientific evidence" in support of their belief.²⁴ Additional later research work focused on salmonella contamination in milk.

The University's decision in 1959 to put the Dairy School within the Department of Food Technology touched off a prolonged and serious debate about the relationship between the CCOA, dairy industry, and University. The association got wind of the proposed change and warned the membership in the newsletter: "no one consulted with the California Creamery Operators Association that created the campus at Davis, or other industry organizations."²⁵ The industry was worried that the Dairy School might gradually be weakened by being absorbed into a larger department with a broader orientation. Concerns over dairy education at UCD continued into the 1960s. In 1967 the directors held a round-table discussion regarding dairy education and a proposed "research chair for the dairy industry" at the University. The consensus of the meeting was that the University could not be the sole arm of dairy education and research; the directors decided to promote more

involvement at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. They further noted that the funds donated by the California Dairy Council for research purposes need not all go to the University of California. The issue of scientific vs. applied research was also discussed — in fact the question arose often in the ensuing years. The 71st annual meeting was given over to a discussion of the problem.²⁶

The meeting, held in Fresno in January of 1970, devoted all of Friday to the question of dairy research and education. Most speakers grappled with the need for increased research. A measure of the importance placed by the CCOA on this issue can be found in the minutes — Fred Abbott noted that this meeting was of equal importance to the CCOA's first. Speakers noted that as the world population grew, a concomitant increase in food production was necessary; thus research was crucial. The lively discussion that followed was described in the Fresno Bee, under the headline "Dairy Industry Airs Research Gripes; Gets Hard Answers." Among the participants were three representatives from UCD, one from the USDA, and another from the State Department of Agriculture. Two CCOA members, Gene Scaramella and Wesley Sawyer, noted that dairy research had become "people" rather than "project" oriented — which they considered short-sighted as research into increased food production ("project") would end up benefiting more people. The University representatives warned the creamerymen that they had to face a new reality: California's politics were no longer rural based or agriculture-oriented but rather dominated by urban legislators. They also noted that the agricultural industry had historically underinvested in research, and challenged the association to help as cost-consciousness grew in the state and federal government. As a direct result of these meetings and related efforts, the University made the decision to continue the services of an Extension Dairy Technologist to work with the industry provide factual information and sponsor special programs.²⁷

By 1970, then, the relationship between the CCOA and the University had changed greatly. The CCOA, acting for the aid of dairymen in the early years of this century, had helped expand the role and size of the University in dairy and agricultural research. By the 1970s the huge University system was no longer as responsive to the needs of the

CCOA, and responded to industry concerns through the Food Science Department.

2. Quality and Association Standards.

Another issue central to the history of the CCOA, and closely allied to research and educational efforts, is that of the promotion of higher standards of quality both in the dairy-man's raw material and the creamery-man's finished products. This proved to be a long process, and one that involved cooperation between producers on the one hand and manufacturers on the other; it also brought in state and federal agricultural officials as inspectors and graders. Inspections, with their requirement to adhere to set standards and ameliorate bad conditions, were often unpopular among the regulated.

The first meeting of the CCOA aimed at attaining higher standards of manufactured milk products. The butter scoring contest winners, as we have seen, were asked to educate the association's membership regarding their techniques. Thus member education would have the gradual effect of raising standards.²⁸ Outside the conventions, early efforts centered on four areas:

1. raising quality by mutual and voluntary agreement among members;
2. obtaining better quality manufacturing milk from patrons, through making patrons aware of better sanitation, the need for healthy stock, and producing raw material of uniform quality;
3. education of members in better production techniques;
4. enforcement of dairy and creamery sanitation and production laws through the State Department of Agriculture and State Dairy Bureau.

These "political" efforts were reflected in the actions of the CCOA in their first convention. Two of the eight resolutions offered and passed aimed at creating higher standards. One called upon the legislature to grant the State Dairy Bureau authority to inspect dairies and creameries. The other suggested increased support of dairy education in California.²⁹ A similar resolution passed the next convention in September, 1903, setting a pattern of support for education on the one hand and regulation on the other. Despite the

actions of conventions in 1901 and 1903, some directors worried that not enough emphasis was being placed on the subject. On October 20, 1904, in a meeting held to discuss the upcoming convention program, directors were urged to place less emphasis on “how-to” presentations and devote more time to a discussion of production standards — defining a “legal standard weight,” setting a maximum allowable water content for butter, standard labeling, and so on, to which members of the association would adhere. The result was a lively discussion at the convention, after which it was reported that “the leading subject of the afternoon was a discussion on the advisability of legally regulating the weight of print butter, water in butter, and coloring.” Opinions on both side of the issue were expressed; some thought inspectors might be arbitrary and prone to political pressures, others felt that regulations would be helpful if enforceable. “All seemed to favor the innovation of a uniform package if it could be brought about.”³⁰

The state passed a dairy inspection law in 1905, and at that year’s annual convention H.J. Faulkner, a state dairy inspector, delivered a paper entitled “Our Work with Patrons.” Faulkner

referred to the new sanitary law and the work of the State Dairy Bureau in enforcing it. This was followed by a general discussion of creamery cleanliness and how more sanitary conditions might be obtained, including through building codes and regulations.

The discussion focused, naturally, at first on creameries; it then shifted to dairies. Faulkner was followed by Professor E.W. Major, who gave a paper on creamery and dairy conditions and their improvement. One result of the discussion was the passage of a convention resolution commending the governor and state legislature for passage of a sanitary control system through the State Dairy Bureau; the resolution did advise, however, that the bureau could not do its job without adequate funds, and urged greater levels of appropriations.³⁰

The standards and quality issue continued to pose problems to members for the next several years. One stumbling block was the low level of appropriations that the legislature set aside for this purpose, and other ideas promoted within state government to deal with creamery and dairy sanitation. In 1907 the membership expressed their disapproval of the legislature's actions regarding the issue that year — not only had they not provided money for dairy and creamery inspection, they also passed a bill that would have veterinarians make dairy inspections. The bill was vetoed by Governor Pardee. The convention later called for federal inspection of California dairy products.³¹ Sanitation and quality control concerns reappeared in 1908. The annual convention held in San Francisco discussed the question of whether or not the CCOA should request that all milk be subject to “compulsory pasteurization,” and heard from William Saylor (once editor of the Dairy and Produce Review) of the State Dairy Bureau on how the agency was handicapped by a lack of funds. The minutes noted that “considerable discussion brought out the general sentiment of the urgent and imperative need of sufficient inspection to insure the proper compliance with the dairy laws now upon the statutes of the state.”³² The idea of sanitary foods and production facilities was not unique to the CCOA; rather the organization was at least partially reflecting the mood of the times; on a national level the federal government had acted by passing the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1907. The need for government involvement continued into 1909; the seventh convention, held in Porterville, considered and passed a motion made by Mr. Starr that asked the association president to name a committee to “communicate and confer with the State Dairy Bureau relative to drawing up some standard form of notice to be used in notifying dairymen of their violations of the dairy laws.”³³

Despite the efforts of the association and others in the dairy industry, the question of quality and standards continued to be acute. In 1913 the annual convention considered a different aspect of the question. By that year, some of the major cities had begun to enact ordinances regulating uniformity of production and other matters regarding dairy production and distribution. What concerned the CCOA was not so much the ordinances as the problem of selling their products in markets in which different rules applied. The sense of the

convention was that they should seek “uniformity and stability in the laws regulating the dairy industry; which means these matters should be embodied in a uniform State law rather than left to the ever changing and often conflicting control of city ordinances.” As a means of dealing with the problem at hand, the members suggested five immediate steps:

1. have at least one dairy industry representative on all large city milk commissions;
2. work toward the development of a better and more practical system of dairy inspection;
3. obtain better cream grading and sanitary butter-making manufacturing to develop better, uniform quality in California butter;
4. require that railroads and other transporters of dairy products be subject to the sanitary laws;
5. obtain "larger, fairer and more adequate" funds for the Dairy Bureau, in light of the attention given to other large California industries.

The fact that the organization was striving for uniformity of product and of market laws was a reflection of the increasing size of the markets served by manufacturers. When each crossroads or small town had its own local creamery, the problem of selling in distant markets did not exist. once milk, butter, and other dairy products began to be produced at a great distance from their markets, getting uniform quality became more important. For the CCOA this became a particular goal after 1913.³⁴

With the coming of war in Europe in August, 1914, the pace of production quickened as the dairy industry, like all of American industry, found an increased market for their goods in the war zone. By 1916, with California dairymen more involved outside the state, the association considered the problem of maintaining high standards in terms of quality, while producing in large quantities. At the convention of 1916, held in Ferndale, it was noted that “with California reaching the surplus stage of production and the necessity of creating outside markets, the discussion of quality played a

prominent part. Cooperation on the part of producers was strongly urged.”³⁵

The question of how to regulate the quality and sanitary standards of the milk from which the creamerymen manufactured their products was addressed in substantive fashion in the early 1920s with the passage of the General Dairy Laws. The CCOA helped evolve a unique pattern of cooperation with the State Dairy Bureau. The laws provided for an industry-funded inspection process, aimed at upgrading the quality of manufacturing milk. Manufacturers paid for the inspection of producers. The program was welcomed by the creameries, but was often unpopular with producers, who were often forced to make capital investments in cooling and sterilization machinery. In addition, a state inspector might reject a patron’s entire shipment. What made the program innovative was that the role of the inspector did not always end at the inspection point. Inspectors were urged to follow rejected milk back to the dairy, look over the establishment, and offer advice to the patron as to how his system might be improved to avoid future rejections. On partial result of the program was a movement toward a unified standard for milk. By the 1960s the production of “manufacturing” milk (milk produced for use in butter, cheese, etc., as opposed to fresh) essentially ended. Dairymen strove to produce one grade of milk in order to maximize their available market — fresh milk distribution or sale to manufacturing plants.³⁶

Concern over standards was also aimed at uniformity of manufactured items. During World War I, as part of the war effort, the CCOA sent Ed H. Webster as their representative to the Food Administration’s Committee on Standards. He reported that the consensus of the committee was that butter be at least 80% butterfat and no more than 16% moisture.³⁷ Webster’s presentation must have struck a responsive chord, as the *Pacific Dairy Review* later noted that one major decision to come out of the annual convention that year was a resolution in support of raising butter quality. As a part of the process it was urged that there be established testing laboratories “for standardization purposes.”³⁸ This movement continued to occupy the association; at the meeting of the Executive Committee in Hanford in July, 1920, the question of

butter standardization was again raised. It was noted that this must be achieved “if we expect to work to one high uniform standard.”³⁹ The University was also enlisted in the effort. Members at the 24th Annual Convention, held November 1-3, 1923 in Oakland, heard Dr. C.L. Roadhouse of the University of California describe the efforts of the Extension in its work in butter standardization and improvement.” He noted that butter scores had risen from an average of 90 to 92 ½ since the work began.⁴⁰ The program showed the link between the CCOA and the University, and also reaffirmed the organization’s belief in the importance of education.

The process of establishing standards for butter, in terms of butterfat, salt, and moisture content, did not always produce the desired result. In the case of butter, it was noted in 1930 that a “double standard” had arisen. California producers were apparently making butter at 81.5 to 82% butterfat levels, a standard which was difficult for other states to meet, especially as federal standards were 80%. The 1930 convention resolved to adopt the 80% butterfat level as standard for California.⁴¹

During the Great Depression and New Deal period (1929 -1941) a variety of laws, regulations and programs were enacted affecting the creamery industry. Among these was the Butter Quality Labeling Act [BQLA] of 1936. The state began considering the bill in 1935, at which time the CCOA expressed some concerns about its provisions. Late in 1935 O.H. Ghiggoile of the State Department of Agriculture appeared at the annual convention and outlined the bill’s probable procedures for licensing butter graders “and enforcing the other provisions.” The meeting and other information must have addressed adequately many of the concerns of the CCOA, as it was later reported that the members decided to support the bill’s enactment.⁴²

At the next year’s meeting the creamerymen assessed the last eleven months experience with the law. C.L. Clairs of the State Department of Agriculture presented the state’s story; this was followed by a discussion led by A. Nicholaisen which brought out the fact that city distributors were “unanimously” in favor of the program, but that some bulk wholesalers were skeptical (noting the

danger of human error in grading); it was also mentioned that the San Francisco Bay region needed a full-time grader and inspector.⁴³ The passage of the Butter Quality Labeling Act meant that after 1936 both the raw material and finished product in buttermaking was subject to state inspection, in the case of milk, financed by the manufacturer. As the years have gone by, the CCOA has centered its efforts more on protection and enforcement of existing dairy laws than the passage of new laws or amendments to old ones.

In 1943 the annual convention in Fresno heard complaints that the BQLA suffered from a lack of aggressive enforcement; the increased demand during wartime apparently stimulated the unscrupulous to put “under grade” butter in “first quality” packages. The convention passed a resolution asking for stricter enforcement of the law.⁴⁴ The situation remained troublesome — President George Dondero described the CCOA’s activities during 1944 and noted his concern that butter grading and enforcement was not what it should be. He also urged association members to redouble their efforts to attain a uniform product, pointing out that there was no uniformity between northern and southern California.⁴⁵

The CCOA received a reassessment of the BQLA in 1950. The paper presented told of the over-all increase in scores from an average of 90 in 1920 to 93 (in 98% of the butter graded) in 1950; it was thus at “sweet cream” levels. The presentation also recounted the role of the University, noting that as a part of the effort the University began a “butter standardization and improvement program” in July 1922, centering on increasing the quality of cream. Meetings were held with producers, creamerymen, university scientists, extension men, and California Department of Agriculture personnel. The result was in a short time 60% of all raw material was at grade A level. The program spread around the state after demonstrating its success. The report also noted the abuses sometimes worked by brokers, who marketed 90 score butter ahead of 93 score, calling it “fresh creamy butter.” Grocers in the 1930s met with the University and several manufactures, complaining that they had no means of recognizing different levels of quality. The combined effort and interest of manufacturers, dairymen, grocers, and the State Department of Agriculture resulted in the passage of the Butter Labeling Act

requiring a quality designation on the carton. Its provisions and enforcement increased profits for dairymen and manufacturers, and resulted in the disappearance of low score butter, as a means of telling grade levels was instituted through the act.⁴⁶

While the CCOA supported the efforts of the State Department of Agriculture in butter grading, inspection and so on, there was resistance to the idea of federal inspection. The suggestion was promoted during the “national emergency” declared during the Korean War (1950-53). One of Secretary-Treasurer Fred Abbott’s Newsletters, dated June 18, 1952, informed the membership of association and dairy industry efforts to oppose the Dairy Division of the Production and Marketing Administration’s proposed emergency regulations regarding inspection and grading. The newsletter warned of a growing pattern of federal involvement, leading to a system which had as its “ultimate purposes ... [the] breakdown of states rights. States rights are barriers to national socialism.”⁴⁷ The directors took up the question in September, noting that the organization was not opposed to federal grading of butter and cheese; rather that they opposed federal inspection of dairies and dairy plants because the State Bureau of Dairy Service “has been and is doing a fine job.” They also remarked that while the idea of military inspection of goods purchased was not bad, it was a waste of money and manpower as the inspectors would be duplicating the efforts of state inspectors.⁴⁸ To the association, inspection was not the issue, but rather at what level the inspection process was controlled. They obviously felt that local or state inspection allowed a better level of control over the process and reduced the possibility of overlapping jurisdictions and variable standards, and feared regulations passed and enforced from Washington.

In the years that followed the Korean War new problems relating to the quality of butter and other dairy products arose. The directors discussed the growing problem of antibiotic residues in milk in the fall of 1956. The FDA, National Cheese Association and Milk Industry were vitally interested in the problem, the latter two organizations attempting to get federal aid for more studies. The CCOA was not directly affected, as the producers were the source of antibiotics through dosages given to their cattle. The association recognized,

however, that it would be in their interest to help, and agreed to request that the University of California assist in the proposed studies. The chief culprit was penicillin, given to cattle to treat mastitis.⁴⁹

The concern of the CCOA regarding inspection and its cost was reflected in a letter sent by the organization to the Senate Fact Finding Committee on Dairy and Milk Plant Inspection Fees and Practices on August 31, 1960. The letter stated the association's belief that inspections were in the public interest, and thus the public should pay part of the costs, through state support. Inspection should remain a concern of the State Department of Agriculture, while the industry should pay for sampling, analyzing, and recording the results. The state should fund enforcement and policing costs, and inspection at the consumer level should be at consumer expense. By this time standards were common — the Bureau of Dairy Standards noted that “quality standards now (1959) covered about all of the manufactured products except dry milk.”⁵¹

The “antibiotics problem” related to impurities in milk, and this menace grew in the public mind in 1960 with increasing knowledge and concern over two new potential contaminants: fallout (see above) and pesticides. The 61st Annual Meeting, held in Santa Rosa, considered the problem of pesticide contamination from both the public relations and research point of view. Members recalled the earlier efforts made in public education concerning fallout in the 1950s; the organization hoped for similar successful action concerning pesticides. A “strong committee” was appointed (and approved by unanimous floor vote) to try to meet the problem head on, with the help of the University and State Department of Agriculture. Pesticides were particularly vexing, as they were the result of practices throughout California agriculture. The problem with antibiotics, by comparison, could be met by working with the dairymen. Members urged careful consideration and study of pesticides in milk.⁵² Fred Abbott added (apparently at some later date) that “it was here [that] groundwork was laid for the Federal Food and Drug Administration to deal through our state educational and law enforcement agencies on the chemical pesticide problem rather than each processor individually.” The convention heard

papers from two medical researchers from UC-San Francisco School of Medicine on the medical basis for federal pesticide controls; these noted that existing federal regulations listed “no tolerance” as the allowable pesticide residue level in dairy products.⁵³ In an environment of increasing pesticide use, such a standard would be difficult to attain.

The pesticide and antibiotic question continued to rage; the bulletin issued by the secretary outlining the subject matter for the mid-year meeting showed a heavy emphasis to be placed on the question. Scientists and government agency representatives were slated to attend.⁵⁴ The meeting, after hearing more pesticide presentations, adopted a resolution on pesticides aimed at government agencies stating that:

1. Industry had been cooperative;
2. levels of tolerance vary and are uncertain owing to unsure testing procedures of uncertain accuracy;
3. regulations on pesticides should delineate "fixed methods for quantitative analysis of chemical pesticide residues."

Copies were sent to the State Department of Agriculture, USDA, and US Public Health and Welfare Administration.⁵⁵ The CCOA members were concerned that no fixed tolerances would be set, leaving manufacturers in particular in the dark as to what was expected of them. This problem was outlined in a letter written on behalf of the association by Fred Abbott to George Larrick, Commissioner of Education and Welfare, Food and Drug Administration, in September 1960. Abbott noted that the CCOA was not particularly concerned with pesticide approval, as “pesticides are not applied on dairy products.” What was of great concern were pesticide residue standards and the tests used to arrive at those standards.⁵⁶

The committee appointed to address this problem was also at work, and by the next annual meeting reported that their work was finished — the state had adopted the standards that they had suggested. President Marty Walters stated in his summary of activities in 1960 that dealing with pesticides had been the most urgent issue. Two agencies — the University of California and the State Department of Agriculture — had been heavily consulted and

advised; although their efforts seemed successful, they were not safe yet and he warned against letting down their guards. He remarked that the CCOA and industry was looking for “enforcement of reason.” Discussion during the annual business meeting brought out that there was no quick or easy screening test for pesticides, although the “Gunther Committee” of the University of California was looking for one. The major problem was that “zero tolerance” was very difficult to test. It was further suggested that the association work with the Cheese and Butter Association to work to have regulations on standards incorporated into the Agricultural Code to avoid duplication of effort.⁵⁷

As might be expected, one of the technical, scientific papers presented at the meeting was on the pesticide problem. Dr. Robert Z. Rollins gave a “Report on Pesticide Residues.” Dr. Rollins felt that the idea of achieving a “zero tolerance” was impossible, given the level of use of pesticides in California agriculture. “It is easy to describe the problem,” he noted, “but much more difficult to suggest a solution.” He also reported that tests in 1958 and 1959 indicated that two to four percent of the 5 samples showed a “remarkable level” of pesticide residues.⁵⁸ Given the public perception of the purity of milk, such findings could prove to be profoundly disturbing to an increasingly concerned population.

The mid-year Tahoe meeting took up the question again in 1961. The directors, meeting in Berkeley in April, decided to invite experts from the UC Medical School, the USDA, AMA, and a representative from the “Dairy Industry Committee” that was looking into the problem on a national level. Accordingly, the morning session featured five medical researchers: entomologist Dr. J.E. Swift on pesticides; Drs. P.K. Bates and L. Henderson (from Carnation and Foremost) discussing a national committee looking into the issue; C.H. Hine, MD, Ph.D, on setting levels of tolerance; and Dr. H.C. Pulley of the State Department of Public Health on public health and pesticides.⁵⁹ With the resumption of nuclear testing in 1961, public concern was again focused on the problem of fallout and foods. The CCOA bulletin for September, 1961, relayed the National Dairy Council’s news release that pointed out that fallout affected all foods, not just dairy products (water received a higher level of contamination); it

was also observed that adequate calcium in the diet was one means of protection against Strontium,⁹⁰ and that a cow would pass along only one-eighth of this dangerous compound to the milk — the rest stayed with the cow.⁶⁰ The efforts of the organization regarding pesticides and fallout were praised by President Walters in his remarks at the next annual meeting, held in February 1962. He warned of a new threat arising, however, to replace pesticides and fallout: cholesterol [see above, education].

Despite the efforts of the CCOA, the pesticide problem remained a baffling one. The directors returned to the problem in their meeting in March, 1964. The problem was seemingly insoluble — the industry was unable to live with the zero tolerance level, now detectable with new testing methods, but the industry would not suggest any level “other than zero” for fear of public condemnation and bad publicity. Like many organizations faced with a puzzling situation, the directors opted for further study and discussion as the answer.⁶² By the mid-1960s the “multiple inspection problem” was again discussed — federal rules and inspectors were the concern. The mid-year directors’ meeting of 1964 resolved that the CCOA should stand for efficiency in inspection, and that inspections should be done in the interest of public health and safety. Accordingly, a resolution was passed calling for inspection in California to be done by the state, on the basis of the USPHS “Standard Milk ordinance,” and that the cost of inspection should not be borne by producers alone.⁶³

Between 1901 and the present the CCOA has worked to raise the level of quality of dairy products through raising standards of sanitation, raw materials, and graded finished products. It has done so through a combination of education, voluntary efforts, and state imposed regulation. The efforts have resulted in a great increase in the quality of milk gathered from the dairies, so much that now virtually all milk produced in California is grade A.⁶⁴ The concomittant marketing effort aimed at selling the state’s dairy products is the subject of the next section.

3. Production and Marketing.

At the turn of the century in California, the dairy and creamery industry underwent a change from serving local markets to a more

highly organized, efficient, and largescale system aimed at marketing and production for growing urban areas around the state. This change, along with other issues we have discussed, was a source of great interest and concern among the members of the new creamery organization upon its founding and has endured as one of the major areas of association activity ever since. Early on, the CCOA attempted to provide some more rational system of organizing urban markets; this expanded as the years passed into the complex system of dairy marketing and regulation of production we know today.

Soon after the association began functioning the idea of developing a better means of selling in an urban market was discussed. In September 1903, a committee of dairymen met at Fresno and proposed the establishment of a "California Butter Exchange." Many dairy and creamery operators felt that San Francisco wholesalers were not treating manufacturers and dairymen fairly. The meeting announced that "the purpose of the proposed exchange is to correct the abuse of 69 fictitious quotations of the San Francisco butter market."⁶⁵ The wholesalers were apparently offering prices below the prevailing rates. The 1904 meeting also addressed this problem. The convention's discussion

... took on every variety, from the kind of cows and feed they consumed to make the butter, to marketing of the same. The last, however, was what interested the convention most. How to straighten out and improve our methods of handling our butter markets is plainly the great question that demands a more satisfactory solution.

G.W. Knieb, a San Francisco butter dealer, addressed the gathering on how the CCOA might help in working out a better marketing system. Knieb's address stimulated a discussion of packaging, labeling, and other issues related to a more modern marketing structure. C.C. Ridgeway led the discussion which went "to show that there is an earnest demand among the creameries for an exchange to take the place of the unsatisfactory method in vogue of quoting the butter markets. Mr. Evans made a motion, which was adopted, to the effect that the secretary notify the manager of every creamery in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys that they were to constitute

themselves one of a committee to meet at a call with the butter dealers of San Francisco to establish a butter, cheese and egg exchange.”⁶⁶

The earthquake and fire that devastated San Francisco in April, 1906, caused a great temporary disruption in butter and dairy products distribution. The destruction of storage facilities made it necessary to reduce the stocks of butter and eggs, resulting in a sharp drop in prices. As a consequence, those creameries that could sent their goods to Los Angeles. By June the situation settled down and prices stabilized.⁶⁷

The gradual shift away from local to centralized creameries was reflected in a set of presentations made at the 9th Convention in 1908. Mr. J.R. Murphy, manager of the Danish Creamery in Fresno, led off the colloquium, giving a paper on the pros and cons of gathering whole milk as opposed to cream from patrons. He reported that the whole milk system was more expensive but the quality of the cream obtained was better. The idea “evoked considerable discussion on the part of those present,” and naturally would fit better into a centralized creamery system. Mr. A. Landy followed with a paper entitled “The Advantages of Centralized Creameries,” which was rebutted by E.H. Zimmerman’s discussion of “The Advantages of the Local Creamery. Such discussion helped place the changes that the industry was experiencing in perspective. while no “answer” was possible or expected, the discussion “brought out the fact that as yet the popular mind has no uniform, representative definition of the term I centralized creamery.”⁶⁸

As the demand for dairy products grew during World War I, the question of marketing California’s production was of great importance. W.H. Roussel of San Francisco spoke at the 1916 convention on “What To Do With Our Butter Production.” He pointed out that the “export demand created by the European War... made it possible to move our over-production at good prices” and warned that the war would provide only a temporary market, adding that “we all know the war cannot last much longer.” Roussel stressed the need for uniform packaging and (as noted above) uniform quality. “The most important factor in the production of butter today for

export,” Roussel said, “is the standardization of quality and packing.” He urged production of standard sized export cube of 12 by 12 inches, weighing 56 pounds each; all creameries, he stressed, should have 500 such cubes on hand, and a brand or mark should be developed to mark the cubes with a serial number identifying individual creameries.⁶⁹ Roussel remained an influential force in the organization. In the first convention after the armistice, he created a sensation when he “took exception to” some of what member J.M. Henderson had said about butter substitutes. Roussel said that as prices and profits rose, the consumption of butter would decrease and consumers would shift to “substitutes” like oleomargarine. “Organize to better the quality of your product, 70 advised Roussel, “and the price will take care of itself.”⁷⁰

In the years that followed World War I, the association made the decision to rely upon other industry organizations to promote dairy products. The 21st Convention, held in Hanford, November 1920, *discussed the role of the California Dairy Council in marketing and urged that it be the “real channel” for dairy advertising.*⁷¹

Other concerns began to arise in the 1920s, as butter and cheese produced in other states or in other countries was sold in California. In 1921 the association passed a resolution asking for an adjustment in the cold storage laws so that such imports could not be labeled as “fresh.” Exports and imports were an important consideration. The annual convention in 1923, held in Oakland, heard W.B. Hopkins speak on the importance of the World Dairy Conference held in Washington, D.C. one hundred and fifty-three foreign delegates attended, highlighting the developing markets present in Japan, China, India, and the western Pacific region. Hopkins noted that these areas had large populations but essentially no dairy industry. His presentation was followed by Dr. C.L. Roadhouse of the University Farm, who also emphasized the potential market in Asia.⁷² The stimulus for exports in Asia is easily understood, as the market in Europe and elsewhere, disrupted by the war, became more stable as normal conditions returned.

The seemingly elusive goal of providing order in the urban wholesale markets was still of concern to the CCOA and industry as a whole in 1925. In January of that year the “Dairymen’s General Legislative Committee, Sacramento,” met and discussed California’s urban dairy produce exchanges, which were operating to the detriment of the butter industry. Suggested reforms called for the abandonment of discounts, replacing the “auction-call” system with a public blackboard posting, the inspection and grading of all materials on sale performed by impartial parties (such as the USDA or State Department of Agriculture), and the establishment of daily prices and quotations based on weighted averages.⁷³

As the number of products derived from whole milk grew, developing a market for them was required. At the 27th Annual Convention, held in Oakland in November 1926, C.E. Gray spoke on the production of skim milk. Gray, founder of the Golden State Company, advised that the “time will probably come when all the milk-solids-not-fat would be used for human consumption.” Gray pointed out that there were large potential markets for dry milk, particularly in the baking industry; he also noted three important factors to be considered in dry milk production — the cost of transportation of the raw material, the value to the farmer of skim milk as feed, and the cost of plant operations. Money, Gray said, would also have to be invested in advertising and market development — as levels of production rose, salesmanship must also improve.⁷⁵

The interest in the sale of dairy products abroad continued. In 1928 Wesley Ashe of the US Department of Commerce presented the five recommendations for successful sales overseas: packaging; knowing which importers were interested or available, and their reliability; foreign duty levels; foreign regulations, different in each country; and steamship rates. The convention was informed that the Department of Commerce had information available on these areas for the use of the dairy industry.⁷⁶

Marketing and production faced a major challenge in the years following the great stock market collapse and Depression beginning in 1929. Federal programs providing relief to the dispossessed and

disadvantaged grew under New Deal legislation pushed through a willing Congress by Franklin Delano Roosevelt beginning in 1933. Among the first of these was the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which established the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA). The idea behind the AAA was an artificially induced "scarcity," and so-called "parity prices" were to be established for basic agricultural commodities. "Parity' was the price set for a product that gave it the same value, in terms of purchasing power, which it had enjoyed during the favorable period from 1909 to 1914." ⁷⁷

In keeping with its emphasis on member education, those at the 34th Annual convention, held in Oakland, heard G.H. Benkendorf, CCOA member and delegate of the National Butter Board discuss the activities and functions of the AAA; later Brice Mace, Jr., AAA regional manager, delineated the functions of his agency. He noted that a troubling surplus was likely, as per capita butter consumption was down. The members discussed the potential for increased competition from oleomargarine. Prices would drop if production was increased, but that was not possible in a time of surplus; if production levels were kept down and prices rose, oleo would become more attractive. Concern with oleo competition was expressed in the convention resolutions. Those regarding the federal government's activities asserted four major themes:

1. dairymen would not accept a plan of production control
as long as foreign oils used for human food were allowed
imported into the US -- the President was urged to request
the power to restrict such oils; as long as exports were
balanced by imports, production controls were
hopeless;
2. taxes on butterfat should be matched by comparable taxes
on butter substitutes;

3. the AAA should promote the consumption of dairy products;
4. oleomargarine should be taxed at a level of 10 cents per pound,
beginning immediately to equalize taxes between oleomargarine and butter.⁷⁸

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the Depression Era for the CCOA and dairy industry was the Desmond Act, and later, Milk Stabilization Act, passed by the California legislature in 1936. These acts and laws established a pattern that led to price controls on most perishable dairy products. A later piece of legislation, the Young Bill, set prices for producers. This legislation was supported by many dairy industry groups, but the CCOA did not become directly involved with urging its passage as an organization. CCOA members were active in promotion of the various bills, but as individuals or members of other dairy industry organizations. The association kept close to its aim of educating members regarding the proposed bills; other groups, organized specifically for lobbying, worked to promote legislation. It was at this time that the Dairy Institute of California led the effort for development and implementation of the Milk Stabilization Law.⁷⁹

As the country struggled through the Great Depression, the CCOA sought to make members aware of other markets and marketing ideas. At the 40th Convention, two speakers discussed the marketing efforts underway in the Pacific Northwest, New Zealand, and Australia. The example of the marketing program in Australia and New Zealand was much discussed; of particular interest were the several thousand milk bars and a program under which employers gave their employees "milk breaks." The results were impressive — when the effort began the per capita consumption of butter and oleo was about even, at around 15 pounds each. This shifted to 25 pounds for butter and 9 pounds for oleo, and all without taxes or restrictions, just an organized, aggressive marketing program.⁸⁰

Like the Great Depression, World War II also caused a major refocus of effort in the dairy industry. While the wartime rationing restrictions caused some problems — as for example when the scarcity of gasoline interfered with milk deliveries from patrons to plants — wartime production was high. While there were complaints about rationing, oleomargarine, adequate inspection and product uniformity, production of all types of dairy products for the Allies was great. The Russians were particularly interested in obtaining butter and casein through the Lend-Lease Program.⁸¹

The end of the war did not bring an immediate return to “uncontrolled” conditions, a situation which really had not existed since 1933. Rationing continued after 1945. Nevertheless, the association soon after Japan’s surrender began to urge the end of rationing and controls administered by the Office of Price Administration (OPA). A resolution passed at the 46th Annual convention in Fresno (November 6, 1945) called for resumption of “supply and demand,” no more rationing, and a rapid end to butter’s participation in the rationing points system as established by the OPA. By January and February of 1946, concern spread to the increasing and uncontrolled competition with small producers (some of them housewives) who were able to buy sweet cream for 50 cents per quart, churn it, and sell it to restaurants, “no questions asked,” for \$1.50 per pound. Buttermakers felt hampered by wartime regulations that made it extremely difficult to compete against manufacturers of other dairy products — most notably dry milk — for raw materials. Members engaged in a vigorous letter writing campaign aimed at senators and congressmen in Washington DC.⁸² The same 1945 convention recognized the need for a well-balanced program of product research and sales promotion for milk and milk products. As a part of this effort, the CCOA decided to explore with the membership and other dairy groups the idea of a national butter organization. Interest in such a national organization led to discussions with the American Butter Institute regarding CCOA membership. The CCOA also worked to expand its own membership, as the organization “considered means to contact other manufacturers for products other than butter for membership in our association.” Clearly, the post-war economic world was to be no less varied and unpredictable than the period of the Depression.

A variety of marketing techniques were attempted in the late 1940s and through the 1950s. One of the most important to the CCOA were the dairy industry exhibits at the California State Fair. As participation grew, finding adequate display space for the exhibitors became a problem. In September 1949, the association directors met and noted that 1040 products were displayed at that year's fair, an increase of nearly 800 over the year before. Because display cases were full, over 200 items had to be stored elsewhere in cold storage. To add more attraction to "Dairy Day" at the fair, a "Dairy Queen" was picked from among the winners of local beauty contests — the idea of hiring a queen, such as a Hollywood star, was rejected. Early the next year the CCOA "Dairy Committee" met to consider ways to improve facilities at the fairgrounds, especially in the new Dairy Products Building. The committee inspected the area and recommended that a "milk bar" be added to the display hall, and that a separate meeting and dining area be established.⁸⁴

The association continued to support scholarly investigations into dairy marketing and production. In 1927 Dr. Edward Voorhies of the University of California prepared a study entitled, "Economic Aspects of the Dairy Industry." This was updated in 1931 under the title "Dairy Products." Both were prepared under the auspices of the Giannini Foundation. The markedly different conditions of the 1940s and concerns about the 1950s led the CCOA directors to urge that these studies be reevaluated for the benefit of the members.⁸⁴

By late in the 1950s the CCOA saw the need for a further reassessment of marketing efforts. These efforts did not involve the association directly but were undertaken by individual firms or by other industry-wide groups. CCOA production and marketing efforts, like those in standards or education, focused on membership awareness and education.

At the June 1959 meeting four papers were presented addressing the subject, "Trends in California Milk Usage on Growing Consumer Demands." Speakers outlined the necessity for change in production patterns, and the development of new ideas and products. "Imitation" production had increased its share of the market, and the proportion of total milk production devoted to fluid milk rose from

30% in 1939 to 65% in 1959. Only 7% of total milk production went into butter; and over the years California butter production decreased from 77 million pounds in 1939 to 24 million in 1958. Butter consumption dropped by almost 50% at the same time that butter was entering the state at increasing levels, so that in 1959, 81% of butter sold in California was imported. The fourth speaker, D.A. Clarke, Jr., of the Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics, UC Berkeley, provided a summary in which he pointed out that California's increasing population was putting pressure on the available milk supply, with the result that manufacturing grade milk would soon disappear, as retail outlets other than as butter or cheese were found. Fluid or fresh milk sales had long since replaced butter, cheese, and other manufacturing production in California. Clarke's presentation documented the trend.⁸⁶

During the 1960s the use of the state fair remained an important marketing effort for organization; however, by the beginning of the 1970s the CCOA considered a new tack. The Board of Directors at the 1970 Annual Meeting decided to hire a public relations and publicity firm on a trial basis to promote manufactured dairy products. Because expenses were greater than income at that time, a special assessment of an additional 10% on 1970 dues was required, a decision unanimously reached. In addition, the directors also agreed to constitute themselves as a membership committee to try to encourage new members to join. The public relations effort began in 1970. The California Service Agency interviewed Fred Abbott for television ("Voice of Agriculture") and radio ("Voice of California Agriculture"). The spots appeared on 13 television stations from San Diego to Eureka, and on 16 radio stations around the state. The interviews focused on the CCOA, its history activities, and functions, as well as the 71st annual meeting.⁸⁷ While such marketing and public relations efforts were not new or particularly innovative, it marked something of a departure from the usual for the CCOA. For the first time the organization promoted itself while promoting the creamery and dairy industry.

The association's efforts at marketing and production began at a modest level at the turn of the century and aimed at easing sales by creameries in urban and foreign markets. By the 1970s the picture

had changed so drastically as to be unrecognizable to the early members. The variety of products made was much greater, with fluid milk encompassing a much larger share of the market than ever before. Competition from imports (foreign and domestic) further complicated matters. Where once cheese and butter production provided the dairyman with his main market for milk, by the 1910s fluid milk sales were the center of California's dairy activities.

4. Affiliations with Other Dairy Industry Groups. It is easy to lose sight of the fact that other groups were active at the same time and in the same industry when the past is viewed through the records of a single organization, or through the eyes of individual members of an association. Because documents and memories are naturally focused on the CCOA, it is easy to forget that the organization was only one of many active in California and around the United States. The CCOA was among the earliest of such dairy trade groups in California, and actively worked in its early years with other associations interested in similar causes. The CCOA gradually and voluntarily abdicated areas of involvement and interest as other groups arose to fill specific roles in support of the dairy industry on a state and national basis.

The CCOA recognized the value of affiliation with other dairy industry groups early in its development. Only two years after it was organized, the association made an effort to lure the National Creamery Butter Makers Association to California for their 1904 meeting.⁸⁸ While the effort was unsuccessful, it did illustrate the interest with in the association of becoming more involved with like-minded dairy and creamery trade groups. Not surprisingly, this effort continued, and in May 1903, the Executive Committee met and invited the California Dairy Association [CDA] to join the Annual Meeting, planned for Sacramento and scheduled to coincide with the state fair. Peter J. Shields, President of the CDA, was asked to address the assembled dairymen.⁸⁹

In the years that followed the CCOA joined forces with allied dairy groups when issues of importance arose. For example, in 1908, when it was felt that the dairy laws of California were going unenforced, the association's Legislative Committee (given the job of monitoring

dairy and creamery interests in the legislature) met with delegates from the Milk Dealers Association and California Promotional Committee to discuss the development of a bill to better fund enforcement of existing laws. Later, in 1909, a similar idea was proposed confront the growing menace of oleomargarine competition.⁹⁰

The idea of affiliating with other groups within the industry was not surprising, given the fact that many CCOA members were also members in the other groups. Men like Sam Greene, long-time leader of the California Dairy Council, met regularly with the CCOA and helped keep the two groups informed of activities of mutual interest.

By 1920 there were a number of other groups organized within the California dairy and creamery industry. The 21st annual convention voted to organize a "Dairy Products Show," with representatives from the CCOA, California Dairy Council, and the Butter, Cheese and Ice Cream Makers Association. Clearly, the CCOA recognized that it did not represent, by itself, the entire industry.

With the growth and development of other dairy industry groups came specialization of effort. The California Dairy Council focused on the dissemination of nutrition information to schools and to the general public. Other groups centered on marketing, influencing government decisions and policies at the state and national levels, or other such efforts. The California Creamery Operators' Association, as we have seen, continued its focus on the promotion of high standards and education regarding processes and policies of interest to the membership.⁹²

World War II stimulated a desire for a more broadly based organization, and at the end of 1944 the 45th annual convention discussed the need for a national creamery and butter association, largely because of the perception that the federal government had mismanaged the butter situation during the war. Blame was placed partially on the fact that there was no national entity to monitor and protect buttermakers' interests on the national level. At the same time President Dondero urged the development of closer relation-

ships between dairy and creamery groups and other agricultural industry organizations. Soon after the end of the war, CCOA directors began negotiations with the American Butter Institute for a membership for the CCOA within it. In addition, "the officers (of CCOA) considered means to contact other manufacturers for products other than butter for membership in our organization."

Secretary-Treasurer Fred Abbott summarized the activities of the CCOA in supporting the development of dairy industry groups in California and the nation in a speech before the Executive Committee as it met in joint session with the Executive Committee of the California Dairy Council [CDC). He noted that the organization supported the movement after World War I that became the CDC, and had helped get the American Dairy Association and California Dairy industry Advisory Board off the ground. The development of these groups allowed the CCOA to focus its efforts on areas other than those supported by the CDC or CDIAB. CDC specialized in dairy nutritional promotion through the schools and media, while the 65 CBIAB took over dairy advertising and promotional efforts. In order to keep up with activities and efforts of the other groups, the CCOA held joint sessions with them. In 1955 the CCOA met with the California Farm Bureau Dairy Department, California Dairy Advisory Board, California Cheese Association, and directors of the American Dairy Association at the Hotel Claremont in Berkeley. Each organization presided over a portion of the program. Topics included legislation and government regulation, technical and scientific papers; the CCOA representatives focused mostly on marketing.⁹⁶ Since the 1960S CCOA has taken part in marketing efforts and other campaigns as an affiliate of other groups. In 1961 Gordon Ruehl of the ADA presented materials generated for "June Dairy Month." Fred Abbott added, "when our 'little old Association' started the national merchandizing program which lead to the ADA the 47 had a vision. Now it is no longer a vision, but a reality." Later that year association disappointment with exhibits at the State Fair led the directors to decide to work with the ADA to see if better presentations might not be arranged for the next year. By 1970, with the cost of research increasing and with greater pressures distracting the University, the CCOA directors considered starting an effort to establish a dairy industry-funded research laboratory, run through groups like the

CCOAF ADA, milk Advisory Board, California Milk Producers Advisory Board, and others. One director suggested the name, “Dairy Industry Extension Laboratory.”⁹⁹

The CCOA has prided itself over the years as having been the first among California’s dairy industry groups. While not the “parent” of other organizations, the CCOA did provide support for new groups and served as an example of a successful organization. As the size, complexity, and variety of conditions changed, it became apparent that the CCOA could not hope to adequately represent all of the state’s dairy industry. It was partially to that end that support for and affiliation with other industry groups was aimed.

5. Government Relations.

The CCOA does not undertake political or lobbying activities as an organization. Individual members, of course, exercise their political rights as they see fit, but the association itself does not now actively pursue political goals. This was not always the case, however. In the early years of the organization the CCOA worked to further political efforts beneficial to the creamery industry at both the state and national level. Later, as the CCOA began to leave such actions to other dairy industry organizations, the association kept members aware of governmental policies (proposed or adopted) that would affect their industry.

Interest in political activity and governmental relations is one of the enduring themes in CCOA history. While political pressures were brought to bear by members on a variety of issues early on — for example, in promotion of the University Farm at Davis, Depression-era programs, and rationing policies during World War II — this activity can perhaps best be seen through two major examples: the fight against oleomargarine, and concern and study of the federal dairy price support program.

The fight against oleomargarine was one of the first organized efforts of the CCOA, and was a recurring topic at annual conventions, directors’ meetings, and sessions of special committees.

One of the first signs of the effort to come can be found in the records of the first convention. One of the nine resolutions passed at the convention urged that the sale of oleomargarine be regulated by the state. Such interest continued in 1903, and the association commended state and federal officials who instituted a crackdown on “fraudulent traffic in oleomargarine and renovated butter.” Further efforts in this direction were given approval by the convention. While in later years the argument in favor of oleomargarine regulation and taxation was framed in terms of health and sanitation, early comments show that the potential competition with butter lay at the heart of the controversy. In December 1904, the CCOA convention passed a resolution that called for preservation of laws restricting oleo, adding, “a more easy sale of oleomargarine will be inimical to the best development of dairying and that we petition our senators and representatives in Congress to use every effort keep the present laws intact.”¹⁰¹

As time passed, manufacturers of oleomargarine worked to end restrictive laws and taxes on the manufacture and sale of their product. By 1909 the issue again took center stage at the annual convention. After a lecture, illustrated with “lantern slides,” William Saylor spoke to the members on the subject of national dairy legislation. The ensuing discussion caused the formation of a seven-member committee with the power to “take full action toward organizing a Dairy Union or take other such steps as a Committee of this Association, as may be necessary to meet the confronting oleomargarine question.” The members passed a resolution in a similar vein, generated by the “alarming” increase in oleo manufacture and the increasing pressure on Congress by oleo makers for more liberal laws. The resolution said: “Resolved, that the California Creamery Operators’ Association do all in their power to cooperate with the National Dairy Union in upholding the present laws and if possible make them more binding in the restriction of the sale and manufacture of oleomargarine ...”¹⁰²

The Oleo Committee began its efforts in January 1910. Their first report to the Executive Committee was focused on securing funds and other support for the coming battle. The fight centered on the Burlson Oleomargarine Bill. The CCOA, with its special committee,

raised funds to be donated to the National Dairy Union to aid in their efforts “to fight the cause.” The Executive Committee was also urged to establish a second special fund to be spent at their discretion “in cases where money is needed in formulating ... laws or defending them for the Creamery Men.”¹⁰⁴

Efforts on the national level were matched by activity on the state level. In 1911 a “large delegation” of CCOA members attended a meeting in Sacramento that registered its approval of a new dairy law. The legislation had strong provisions regulating the handling and sale of margarine which “brought out much opposition from the packers and those interested in its sale.” “Paid attorneys” were noted in attendance at the hearings, there to promote oleo; “but after much work by the Executive Committee and a few loyal workers who not only spent their time in getting the bill in form to present to the legislature but attended several meetings when the bill came before the Committee which finally reported favorably on it to the legislature when it passed and finally signed April 22 by Governor Hiram Johnson giving California a dairy law second to none in the United States.”¹⁰⁵ With the victory at state level, the CCOA turned to its membership, and in November 1911 added to the by-laws a provision that no one “in any way” connected “with the sale or manufacture of oleomargarine or other fraudulent dairy products” would be allowed membership.¹⁰⁶

California in 1910 and 1911 was in the midst of a period of major political reform, and it is not surprising that the CCOA would be active in politics. However, after the victory in 1911 came second thoughts, and by 1914 the organization reassessed its involvement in political activity. The annual meeting in Modesto was visited by Chester H. Rowell, a leading reformer, Progressive, and close associate of Governor Hiram Johnson. With Rowell was John M. Eshleman, who refuted “in strong terms” charges made by T.A.W. Carver of the State Dairy Association “that falsely represented the Governor in his attitude toward dairy legislation.” Rowell rose to warn that “when conventions of this character got to doing politics ... their usefulness ceased to exist.” The uproar stimulated one member, A. Jensen, to resign, in part over “the political unpleasantness occurring during the meeting.” His resignation was not accepted, and the

Secretary was told to work to bring him back to the organization. The result of the discussion that followed was a resolution that repudiated “the efforts that have been made to commit the dairy interests of this state to a political propaganda.” Henceforth, voted the members, the CCOA was to promote the dairy industry and stay out of politics.¹⁰⁷

For the next few years all was quiet concerning oleomargarine, and CCOA activity in politics focused on simply making members aware of proposed bills regarding changes in pasteurization requirements, tuberculosis testing, and other innovations. Members were urged to keep aware of the developments, because in spite of the help of some nondairy industry people, most lobbyists and decision makers were ignorant of issues important to the creamerymen.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, oleomargarine remained a concern to the membership. During the 1918 convention held at Visalia (and rescheduled from October to December because of the great influenza epidemic of 1918) a heated discussion grew out of remarks by J.M. Henderson on profits, prices, and oleomargarine. As we have seen, W.H. Roussel “took exception” to the remarks, noting that the result of increased producer profits was increased prices, a reduction in butter consumption, and increased consumption of “substitutes” like oleomargarine by consumers.”¹⁰⁹

With the end of World War I came renewed efforts by oleomargarine makers to remove the restrictions and taxes placed on their product. In addition, new “imitation” products were also developed that would provide new direct competition with creamery products. The result was renewed political activity by the CCOA.

In February 1919, Sam Greene, W.H. Roussel, and C.E. Gray met in San Francisco to discuss two proposed bills in the California State Legislature aimed at these items. The CCOA received a “confidential communication” from the Glassblowers’ Union regarding AB14, known as the “Oleomargarine Bill.” The proposal was described as a “very bad measure which should not become law. It would repeal all present section of laws related to oleomargarine.

... It would permit the manufacture and sale of colored oleomargarine without any restrictions except small licensing fees ... The present law is a good one. It provides that oleomargarine shall not be made to resemble yellow butter.

The law, it was noted was fully and fairly enforced by the State Dairy Bureau.¹¹⁰ Also of concern was AB534, the "Imitation Milk Bill." The men noted,

We believe it really to be of greater importance than the oleomargarine Bill. In our judgement the manufacture or sale of imitation, (or) filled, milk, should be prohibited, just as the manufacture and sale of filled cheese is prohibited by existing laws.

The discussion cited the supposed dangers such products had for children and suggested that if for some reason such product were allowed sold, they should be strictly regulated.¹¹¹ Creamery interests fought back with their own suggested legislation, SB459, which would have prevented the use of oleomargarine, butter, or cheese not wholly made from pure milk or cream in any institutions receiving state financial assistance. It was noted that in 1918 the State Board of Control had purchased oleo for state facilities as a cost cutting measure. The creamerymen urged that such a practice be reconsidered because butter had better food value and because the inmates of state hospitals and "Homes for the Feeble-Minded" were not "free agents" able to choose for themselves, but rather had to take what was provided.¹¹²

Attacks on oleomargarine generally took three forms: imposition of taxes on the finished product or its components; prohibition of coloring to resemble butter; and publicity regarding what went into oleo and how it was made. The fight intensified in the early 1920s. The 1921 convention passed a four-part resolution dealing with oleo and imitations. It suggested the imposition of a tariff on edible oils destined for use in oleo, on imported dairy products, butter, and dairy by-products at ten cents per pound, with revenues "to protect and promote the interests of American dairy products." It also opposed the sale of "filled condensed milk" which "endangers the

health of our children (and) robs our dairymen of a legitimate market for their butterfat.” Congress, the resolution urged, should not allow the manufacture or sale of such “spurious imitations of dairy products.” Copies of the resolutions were sent to California’s congressional delegation; members registered their support of IRS regulations on oleo as provided for in the Oleomargarine Law of 1902.¹¹³

Such efforts point up the fact that the dairy industry had to come to some kind of accommodation with the growing number of imitation products and their producers. As we have seen, early efforts centered on taxes and restrictions as to color. By 1924 new tactics were attempted. While the 1924 Convention attacked oleo production as bad for society’s health and the fertility of the soil and demanded “an adequate tax or other control on all oleomargarine manufactured or sold in California,” the CCOA was also preparing to join forces with other dairy groups.¹¹⁴ Soon after the convention closed, representatives of the CCOA took part in “the Dairymen’s General Legislative Committee.” Other dairy groups involved included the CDC and California Dairymen’s Federation and its member organizations. The meeting discussed the question of trying to tax, control, or ban oleomargarine. An outright ban was not possible, recognized the committee, so taxes on oleo should be dedicated to funding oleo inspection and regulations. Also, for the first time, packaging was considered. Some brands of oleomargarine decorated their packages with pictures of silos, cows, milk cans, and so on. The group urged that oleo labels should be clearly marked as such, with the word “oleo margarine” in letters at least one-half inch high on all sides. It was hoped that clearly differentiating butter from oleo, and prohibiting “unscrupulous advertising” would help their cause.¹¹⁶

In 1925 the California legislature passed a pro-dairy oleomargarine bill, which was signed by the governor and submitted to the electorate for approval. The members resolved to fight for its passage; but, as CCOA President G.H. Benkendorf said after its defeat, “instead of meeting the enemy and they are ours, we met the enemy and we are his; however the money was well spent and the campaign conducted in a dignified manner leading to good

educational work ... ” The members passed another resolution at the meeting, suggesting a new tactic which was employed on many occasions in the years to come. It was noted that dairy production sanitation standards were very high,

and ... it appears that some of the raw materials used in oleomargarine are produced under conditions of indescribable filth: Now let it be resolved that our Legislative Committee be hereby instructed to investigate to see whether laws cannot be enacted which will require the same high standards of sanitation in the production of copra and other raw products used in the manufacture of oleomargarine as in the production of milk and its products.¹¹⁷

With the arrival of economic dislocation caused by the Great Depression (1929-1941), competition between butter and cheap oleomargarine became more intense. Discussion centered on retaining and if possible extending oleo taxes to help reduce the price differential between the two. In addition, efforts were made to retain tariff barriers against cheap foreign edible oils. Creamerymen pointed out that these taxes were justified in part as a means equalizing the level of taxation between butter and oleo. The Legislative Committee (itself partially an outgrowth of the early efforts to fight margarine) reported in 1935 that efforts to remove the tax on colored oleo were defeated, but that a renewed assault on restrictive oleo laws could be expected in 1936, led by the American Institute of Domestic Fats and Oils.¹¹⁹

By 1937 the battle against oleo, waged by the CCOA and other dairy groups, was thirty-five years old. With the beginning of a new advertising effort by oleo manufacturers, stressing the nutritional benefits of oleo, came a reevaluation of the CCOA's anti-oleomargarine activities. The association, meeting in Oakland at the Western Regional Dairy Conference in November 1937, came to a consensus stating that too much fighting with oleo makers was harmful. Margarine manufacturers were able to portray themselves as “protectors of the poor man,” attacked by buttermakers who would force prices up at a time of economic hardship. The CCOA reached, then, an important turning point in their war: it was

decided to stress the value of butter and other dairy products and leave oleo alone.¹²⁰

Faced with war in Europe, the government began increasing the size and power of the military after 1939. This, naturally, increased government purchases of dairy products. The 42nd Annual Convention, held in Oakland just three weeks prior to the attack-on Pearl Harbor, heard papers describing the coming expansion. One speaker, Mr. Crump, advised members that the Navy had just adopted regulations requiring that purchases of butter and margarine be equal. The membership reacted by resolving to promote greater use of butter in the military.

World War II and related wartime production consumed the members' time and interest between 1941 and 1945. Promoters of oleo kept up pressure on the government, and the association urged the chairman of the Legislative Committee to follow the activities of oleo producers and their advocates in Washington, in 1944 President Dondero's report included a discussion of oleomargarine. Oleo interests, he remarked, tried to take advantage of the wartime situation, and introduced 128 bills around the nation "designed to eliminate the tax on colored oleomargarine." He was distressed to report that no real defense was mounted except by butter manufacturers. The CCOA had taken two steps: first, it challenged the oleo bill introduced in the Senate and roused the Dairy Protective Association to action; and second, it made California Dairy interests aware of the attacks being made on their interests by the oleo men.¹²³

By 1948 pressure was again building to remove the tax on colored oleomargarine, and the CCOA again attempted to defend the legitimacy of the tax. Fred Abbott sent a letter to members of Congress outlining CCOA's concerns and noting that the bill would have far-reaching and poorly understood repercussions. "They go far deeper than the mere petty propaganda of Oleo vs. butter." There were only twelve major manufacturers of oleomargarine in the United States, while dairying in California "provides the largest annual income of any branch of agriculture. Nationally it represents 24 6/10ths% of the farm *income*." Dairying also provided a market

and income for cotton and soya bean farmers greater, than that provided by oleo, through the sale of cotton and soy bean meal as cattle feed. Abbott also noted that dairying provided beneficial natural fertilizer and helped control soil erosion, while the big oleo makers were only interested in making profits. He also pointed out that creameries and dairies were heavily regulated — a California , butter plant had 92 separate licenses required to operate, as well as a state-licensed sampler, weigher,, tester and grader all paid for by the creamery. While butter had to remain pure, oleo could use preservatives. These factors, noted Abbot, made the tax on colored oleo more understandable.¹²⁴ The members followed Abbott's efforts with a resolution urging that oleo be allowed to be any color other than yellow (one member suggested green), yellow being the "trademark" of butter. 125 Soon thereafter the Directors met in San Francisco. The Legislative Committee was urged to work diligently to oppose legislation to permit butter-colored oleo. Also discussed was the question of whether or not "it would be advisable for the dairy industry to make uncolored oleo ... The way to stop the inroads of substitutes made with cheap vegetable oils was to take the profit out of it."

Pressures were brought to bear on once-sympathetic senators by oleo forces in 1949, and over the next few years the movement to remove restrictions on oleo grew. In 1949 the "color line" was broken, and concern over competition was refocused from oleo alone and encompassed the growing production of imitation dairy products. In December 1949, the CCOA proposed that vegetable oils used in making imitation dairy products be subject to the same "sanitary regulations and license fees comparable to milk and milk products."¹²⁷ The discussion was stimulated in part by a bulletin issued by Stanford University stating that if whale oil was to be used for oleo the whales would have to be embalmed at sea. The officers of the CCOA suggested that "an anti-preservative oleo-bill might be in order at the next session of the legislature," and that if oleo was to be considered as good and nutritious as butter, it should be subject to the same strict production rules as butter, from raw material to graded finished product.¹²⁸

By 1952 it was clear that restrictions on oleo-margarine, beyond basic purity and standards, were a thing of the past. The CCOA Newsletter of October 14, 1952, suggested that buttermen should have been at the forefront when oleo was developed, and taken up its production themselves, rather than assuming the position of the obstructionist. Now, members were warned, all should be aware of the new imitation products — ice cream filled milk, etc. — and take the lesson of oleo to heart. Perhaps joining rather than fighting was the answer.¹²⁹ The issue was the subject of a panel discussion at the 53rd Annual Meeting held January 1953, entitled “What Position is Best for the Dairy Industry, Producers and Processors Alike, Relative to the Problem Developing in the Use of Vegetable Oils in all Dairy Products.” The discussion brought out several salient facts. First, all agreed that such products were here to stay; no hope of legislating them away should be entertained. Second, the main competition was imitation ice cream (also known as “mellorine”). Third, no consensus was reached on whether or not dairy products producers should make these items as a sideline. Fourth, the major tactic suggested to control these products’ inroads was labeling — regulations should require that the word “imitation” be prominently displayed, and a full list of ingredients included. Finally, fifth, because vegetable oils were being “produced by other farmers,” they would “have to be handled – from the legislative standpoint — as legitimate competition.”¹³⁰ Despite this seemingly measured approach, the Directors voted in March 1953 to go on the record supporting the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of imitation products. The action was taken despite the possibility that consumers would become antagonized. By May it was clear that the effort had been counter-productive. The Directors noted that the Dairy Industry had suffered a “loss of public esteem,” and that the controversy pitted farmer against farmer, coop against coop, operator against operator. Two schools of thought remained: one group continued to support restrictive legislation, while the other sought to allow dairy plants to make imitation products under specific labeling and manufacturing regulations.¹³¹

Labeling, since the early 1950s, has been the major emphasis of the dairy industry’s efforts to deal with imitations. It was not long before it became clear that the prominent placement “IMITATION” was a

deterrent to sales, and the CCOA focused on enforcing the “conspicuous” label law.¹³² Over the years labeling laws were monitored and better enforcement encouraged. -In 1968 a symposium on imitation products at the 69th Annual Meeting alerted members to the increased quality of imitation milk products.¹³³ Dr. Dunkley of the University of California, Davis, advised the convention that trained milk judges were often fooled by imitation products. The Directors discussed the problem at their next meeting, stressing particularly the question of whether or not these products were thoroughly inspected, and by whom?¹³⁴ Ironically, one of the last imitation products to raise a furor within the CCOA was a marriage of butterfat and oleomargarine developed at the University of Utah.¹³⁵

Despite the longstanding battle with imitations and oleomargarine, the CCOA also served to keep its membership aware of and to represent their interests in other proposed governmental actions or policies. We have seen how the association lobbied successfully for the founding of a dairy school and the imposition of government regulations concerning standards of sanitation and quality, inspection, labeling, and government relief programs in the Depression. Attempts to get government aid to increase exports in the 1920s and 1930s were matched by requests for protective tariffs to control imports of both dairy products and edible oils destined for oleomargarine production. Following the passage of the Wagner Act in 1935, creamery unions, like all non-farm labor, became protected by federal legislation, resulting in a spread of union activity. Finally, with the growing awareness of the effects on the environment caused by industrial pollution, government regulation of waste disposal has become more restrictive. The CCOA served to inform the membership of the changing situation and also to help in some way to represent the interests of creamerymen before the public and government.

With the passage of oleo and imitations as an area of particular concern in the early 1950s, the other major area of controversy between the government and CCOA has been the program of dairy price supports. Interestingly enough, this program also served to

help heal the breach between cooperative creameries on the one hand and proprietary dairy firms on the other.

Government actions affecting the creamery economy began before World War II. Price support programs like the AAA and wartime purchases had an enormous impact on the sale of dairy products. The CCOA had the distinction of being the first organization “officially to declare for equitable readjustments in dairy price support structures or complete decontrol of dairy prices and a return to the law of supply and demand.” A resolution was passed thanking President Truman for decontrol of dairy products entitled “After Liberation — Gratitude.”¹³⁶ Such admiration was short lived. The next annual convention (1947) passed resolutions urging the Senate and House of Representatives to try to change President Truman’s attitude toward the domestic dairy industry (he had reduced tariffs on imports) and pledged the organization to work toward a “permanent self-supporting agricultural price program.”¹³⁷ Despite stated desires by the CCOA for deregulation and decontrol by the government, price control programs have remained on the books since the 1930s. Since the programs were not likely to end, particularly since American agriculture was not united in demanding their end, the CCOA urged that mitigating efforts be undertaken to rationalize the programs. In 1950 the CCOA Golden Anniversary Meeting passed two resolutions bearing on price support programs. The first urged that support levels be established for 1951 that took into account seasonal price fluctuations. The second asked that a “Price Stabilization Act” be passed to end “price violations and shady practices.”¹³⁸ If the idea was to get the government out of the dairy business to as great a degree as possible, noted Fred Abbott, it would have to help by first controlling its own appetite for government programs. He reported that over 5000 bills were to be proposed to the 1953 session of the state legislature, adding, “our industry has been loud in opposition to encroachment of government in industry yet we are constantly submitting bills asking for more.”¹³⁹

In March 1953 the association established a “Price Support Study Committee,” with Del Secara as chairman, A.G. Merrill, Jim Urquhart, and George Dondero of the CCOA as members, and Dave Clark of

the Gianinni Foundation as an ex officio member; and Fred Abbott as secretary. The committee was given four specific tasks:

1. to study the price support system;
2. observe changes in it;
3. counsel Secretary of Agriculture Benson and California congressmen; and
4. keep dairy people in California informed about the program.

The committee met several times, and informed the CCOA membership about their efforts in October, 1953. They learned that the government was at present committed to price supports at 90% of parity, thus ensuring a market for all milk production at that level. For that year, government purchases would represent 8.5% of total national production, or over 10 billion pounds. At those levels a large carryover surplus into 1954 was expected. The committee found that the system encouraged high prices which discouraged consumption while at the same time encouraging high levels of production by providing a floor through which prices could not descend. Secretary Benson, it was noted, was leaning toward ending the program at the end of the "current marketing year."

The effects of the program were apparently well understood by most in the industry. What was more to the point were the suggested ways of dealing with problems caused by the price support system. The committee suggested a "Short Range" and a "Long Range" program.¹⁴¹

The Short Range program was aimed at a relatively rapid transition away from supports, through some immediate adjustments. It was suggested that other commodity support levels, particularly among those producing food oils, be reduced simultaneously to avoid unfair and unbalanced support for competing products. The committee further suggested a multiple-price support program, based on considerations such as producer group income levels, who used the products thus affected, and geographical location (to minimize the impact on pockets of the agricultural economy around the nation). Product quality should also be stressed, to enhance sales.

The Long Range program was, said the committee, essential to the industry. In order to be successful it would require several major features. Efforts must be made to increase demand through sales promotion, new outlets and new products, working to end local trade barriers to enhance sales in distant markets, expansion of awareness in the nutritional value of milk and dairy products (particularly at the government level), and expansion of foreign markets. The committee made two recommendations for action: first, steps must be taken to dispose of the accumulated surplus, and second, industry efforts must be focused on instituting the “Long Range” program.

Price support levels fluctuated over the next several years. In 1955-56 they stood at 80% parity for milk, 76% for churning cream. In 1956 butter holdings by the government were reduced to zero; the press was urged to take note, as butter, the organization explained, had long been the “whipping boy” in California’s newspapers when complaints were aired over the agricultural price support program and attendant surpluses. Lower parity levels established in April 1954 increased demand for butter; this also affected consumption of market milk. While it was still clear that in 1955, industry was aided by the program, it was hoped that it might be phased out over the next few years.

In 1953 the CCOA supported “flexible price supports.” The results were discussed in 1956, as the “Economic Study Committee” reported on meetings with the Secretary of Agriculture and Congressional committees. The committee noted that “during the peak of government purchases and holdings of dairy products, the dairy industry suffered losses in public relations. Under the ‘flexible price support’ program surpluses have decreased, consumption has increased, particularly butter, and the stigma of public opinion is pointed at us less sharply.”¹⁴² The association remained ambivalent in its opinion of the program. Fred Abbott noted that its original aim was to save farmers from bankruptcy, not set commercial prices for farmers’ products, and “not as a means of making money and becoming an industry controlled by the Federal government at the whim of some men back in Washington DC who may not be familiar with conditions out of their own state or locality.” Nevertheless,

flexible price supports, the school lunch programs and other governmental aid was accepted despite musings about a return to a system of supply and demand.¹⁴³

With the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960 and the inauguration of a new administration in Washington came a reevaluation and assessment of the price support program. Fred Abbott summarized the situation in a Bulletin to members dated January 30, 1961. The controls had been in place, he wrote, for twenty-seven years. There had been unsuccessful attempts to have state, rather than federal, controls. Later controversies arose over which products should be controlled — all dairy products, just market milk, or other combinations. He informed the members that federal wartime restrictions and rationing had resulted in the closure of twenty-six plants by 1944; and reminded members that dairying had to be considered as one industry — one product or commodity could not be freed of controls by itself and not result in damage to other sectors.

In 1962 a new controversy arose. Price levels were based on surplus levels, but the CCOA was unable to get a clear definition as to what exactly constituted a surplus. Throughout the year the CCOA tried to pin down the USDA on the question. The Creamery Operators remarked, “the question is being raised with increasing frequency in dairy groups in the country, ‘do federal authorities really wish to eliminate surpluses or attain permanent federal control over production?’”¹⁴⁵ The newspapers around the state picked up the story. The Los Angeles Times reported, “Agriculture Department Can’t Define Surplus,” adding that the USDA admitted that there was no set definition of a surplus item.¹⁴⁶

While there was general dissatisfaction with the concept of federal price support programs intervening in the marketplace, the price support program had by 1963 become a fact of life. Otie M. Reed, past director of the National Creameries Association, spoke on the subject in 1963 at the Annual Meeting, held in San Francisco. He remarked that many producers thought parity levels too low; and added that “producers have fared very, very well; perhaps too well under the orders.”¹⁴⁷

Since the furor of the mid-1960s the price support program has been less of a topic of general discussion by the CCOA. Members have continued, naturally, to monitor the program, but the organization has not entered the fray over the issue, to a degree at least because the membership has been of two minds about it. The potential for divisive debate and the lack of a general consensus as to what policy should be followed has resulted in a long period of relative quiet about the issue. The CCOA has continued to spread information about the program, as in 1983's June meeting at Lake Tahoe, where a federal official warned members about the lower price support levels to come.

The dairy industry, like much of American industry in general and agriculture in particular, has had a long and often contentious relationship with government at all levels. Not surprisingly, government programs of direct benefit to the industry (education, sanitation, emergency relief) or required by national emergency (wartime rationing and controls) have been accepted with enthusiasm, dismay, or gratitude, depending on the circumstances. Like many, distrustful of government power, it has sought to influence government for its own protection. The result has been a mixed record of successes and failures. The CCOA also learned that, as a representative of only one corner of one branch of American industrial agriculture, its ability to influence events to any appreciable degree was greater if focused on public and member education, rather than in attempting to directly influence the government on its own.

[Back to Top](#)

IV. 1900 – 1983: A Summary.

The collected records of the CCOA run up through 1972; the association's activities since that time have centered on member information and educational efforts regarding energy conservation, new processes and new technologies available, and a continuing close relationship with the University of California.¹⁴⁸

The CCOA, born in Progressive-era California, has had a mixed record of successes and failures. Lessons can be derived from both. In its early years the organization was largely successful in its goals — establishment of a dairy school, raising standards of quality and

sanitation, member and public education, and so forth. Further, as other groups arose within the dairy industry, the CCOA willingly shifted off specific functions to the new organizations. Furthermore, the CCOA played an important role within the industry in times of national crisis such as the Depression or World War II, through the rapid dissemination of information and help in coordination of industry-governmental efforts. The association also helped keep the government informed regarding the views, opinions, and attitudes of its members.

Successes have been matched by what on the surface appear to be failures. Certainly, the association was unsuccessful in keeping oleomargarine out of the marketplace. However, it is clear that the oleo experience helped the industry formulate its response to the introduction of imitation products in the 1950s. Imitation ice cream has not had the success that “imitation butter” (oleomargarine) has had, and imitation fluid milk has not been successfully marketed even though there were early indications that several national concerns had such a program under consideration. Finally, the dairy price support program has proved to be a mixed blessing, and trying to alter or end the system has become a virtual impossibility, given the political power of the dairy industry. However, in times of fiscal austerity, the demands by consumers for the end of such programs is likely to grow. Perhaps a review of the “Long Range Program” put forward in 1953, coupled with renewed public education efforts, would serve to help focus the argument at both the government and public levels.

[Back to Top](#)

Footnotes

Note: since the bulk of the material used in the preparation of this history came from the ten bound, usually unpaginated archival volumes collected by the California Creamery Operators' Association, citations from that source will be referenced by volume number and date only. Documents within each volume are arranged in chronological order.

1. George E. Mowry, The California Progressives.

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951),
passim.

2. Dairy and Produce Review, vol. I, no. 29, Jan. 2, 1902, pp. 7-8. It should be noted that William Saylor was the editor of the Dairy and Produce Review, and the CCOA voted to have that magazine be its "official organ." The large number of citations to this magazine for the early history of the CCOA is the result of the destruction of the organization's records in the 1906 earthquake and fire in San Francisco, leaving the Dairy and Produce Review as the major source for information regarding this period.
3. Ibid., p. 1.
4. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
5. Ibid., p. 10.
6. Ibid., vol. I, no. 2, June 27, 1901, p. 1, "The Butter Scoring Contest."
7. Ibid., p. 6.
8. Ibid., vol. IV, no. 3, Jan. 1, 1903, passim.
9. Ibid., vol. I, no. 29, Jan. 2, 1902; vol. IV, no. 3, Jan. 1, 1903, passim.
10. Ibid., vol. IV, no. 3, Jan. 1, 1903, passim.
11. CCOA vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, Feb. 5, 1903. [CCOA volumes hereafter cited by volume ("Vol.") and date only.]
12. Vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, July 7, 1904; Oct. 20, 1904.
13. Vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, Dec. 8, 1904.

14. Vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, Dec. 14, 1905.
15. Vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, Dec. 13, 1906; Vol. II, February, 1907, pp. 5-7.
16. Vol. II, Nov. 12, 1908.
17. Vol. IV, Nov. 1-3, 1923; April 22, 1924; August 20, 1924; Oct. 29, 1924; Nov. 8, 1924; Nov. 11, 1924; Nov. 20, 1924.
18. Vol. IV, Nov. 20, 1929; Nov. 12, 1930.
19. Vol. III, Nov. 18-20, 1920.
20. Vol. V, Aug. 8, 1950.
21. Vol. V, Dec. 5-6, 1947.
22. Vol. VI, June 27, 1957.
23. Vol. VI, July, 1958.
24. Vol. IX, March 23, 1965.
25. Vol. VII, April 21, 1959.
26. Vol. IX, Feb. 23, 1967; see also June 17, 1969, Oct. 17, 1969, Nov. 10, 1969.
27. Vol. X, Jan. 23-24, 1970; Fresno Bee, Feb. 1, 1970, p.7-F.
28. Vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, Jan. 2, 1902.
29. Ibid.
30. Vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, Oct. 20, 1904; Dec. 8, 1904.

31. Vol. II, Nov. 22, 1907.
32. Vol. II, Nov. 12, 1908.
33. Vol. II, Nov. 19, 1909.
34. Vol. II, Nov. 6, 1913.
35. Pacific Dairy Review, vol. XX,
no. 38, Oct. 5, 1916, p. 890.
36. Interview with Gene Scaramella and Bruce
Hubbell, Feb. 1, 1984; vol. IV, Jan. 9, 1925.
37. Pacific Dairy Review, vol. XXII,
no. 46, Dec. 19, 1918, passim.
38. Ibid., no. 50, Dec. 26, 1918, passim.
39. Vol. III, July 15, 1920.
40. Vol. IV, Nov. 1-3, 1923.
41. Vol. IV, Nov. 12, 1930.
42. Vol. IV, Nov. 7, 1935.
43. Vol. IV, Dec. 7, 1936.
44. Vol. IV, Dec. 8-9, 1943.
45. Vol. IV, "Report of Association's Activities,
1944," by President George Dondero.
46. Vol. V, no date, paper entitled "The Butter
Labeling Act."
47. Vol. VI, Newsletter, June 18, 1952, pp. 1-2.
48. Vol. VI, Sept. 11, 1952.

49. Vol. VI, Aug. 8, 1956; Sept. 5, 1956.
50. Vol. VII, Aug. 31, 1960.
51. Vol. VII, May 7, 1959.
52. Vol. VII, Feb. 16-17, 1960.
53. Vol. VII, Feb. 16, 1960.
54. Vol. VII, May 10, 1960.
55. Vol. VII, June 17, 1960.
56. Vol. Sept. 6, 1960.
57. Vol. VII, Feb. 16, 1961.
58. Ibid.
59. Vol. VII, April 14, 1961; June 23, 1961.
60. Vol. VII, Sept. 29, 1961.
61. Vol. VIII, Feb. 9-10, 1962.
62. Vol. VIII, March 13, 1964.
63. Vol. VIII, June 12-13, 1964.
64. Interview with Gene Scaramella and Bruce Hubbell, Feb. 1, 1984.
65. Vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, Sept. 4, 1903.
66. Ibid., Dec. 8, 1904.
67. Ibid., June 7, 1906.
68. Vol. II, Nov. 12, 1908.

69. Vol. II, Pacific Dairy Review,
vol. XX, no. 38, Oct. 5, 1916, p. 891;
no. 39, Oct. 12, 1916, p. 926.
70. Vol. III, Pacific Dairy Review,
vol. XXII, no. 46, Dec. 12-14, 1918.
71. Vol. III, Nov. 18-20, 1920.
72. Vol. III, p. 37; Vol. IV, Nov. 1-3, 1923.
73. Vol. IV, Jan. 9, 1925.
74. Vol. IV, Nov. 15, 1926.
75. Ibid.
76. Vol. IV, Nov. 20-21, 1928.
77. Thomas Bailey, The American Pageant:
A History of the Republic.
(Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1956)
pp. 842843.
78. Vol. IV, Oct. 26, 1933.
79. Interview with Gene Scaramella and
Bruce Hubbell, Feb. 1, 1984.
80. Vol. IV, Aug. 26, 1939.
81. Vol. IV, facing p. 143, "Report of Association
Activities -- 1944,11 by George Dondero.
82. Vol. V, Nov. 6, 1945;
January February 1946, passim.
83. Vol. V, Nov. 6, 1945;
March 8, 1946, letter to members.
84. Vol. V, Sept. 7, 1949;
May 25, 1949, Feb. 23, 1950.

85. Vol. V, Aug. 8, 1950.
86. Vol. VII, June 18-19, 1959.
87. Vol. X, Jan. 24, 1970; Feb. 2, 1970.
88. Vol. I, Jan. 8, 1903.
89. Vol. I, May 27, 1903.
90. Vol. II, Dec. 21, 1908; Nov. 20, 1909.
91. Vol. III, Nov. 18-20, 1920.
92. Interview with Gene Scaramella and Bruce Hubbell, Feb. 1, 1984.
93. Vol. IV, Dec. 5, 1944; "Report of Association Activities -- 1944, 11 by George Dondero, op. cit.
94. Vol. V, March 8, 1946.
95. Vol. V, April 10, 1947.
96. Vol. VI, Feb. 10, 1955.
97. Vol. VII, Feb. 16, 1961.
98. Vol. VII, Sept. 14, 1961.
99. Vol. X, Jan. 24, 1970.
100. Vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, Jan. 2, 1902; Sept. 17, 1903.
101. Vol. I, Dairy and Produce Review, Dec. 8, 1904.
102. Vol. II, Nov. 20, 1909.

103. Vol. II, Jan. 7, 13, 1910.
104. Vol. II, Dec. 9, 1910.
105. Vol. II, Feb. 9, 1911.
106. Vol. II, Nov. 24, 1911.
107. Vol. II, Oct. 15, 1914.
108. Vol. III, Oct. 11, 1917
(see Dairy and Produce Review,
vol. XXI, no. 39).
109. Vol. III, Dec. 19, 1918
(see Dairy and Produce Review,
vol. XXII, no. 46).
110. Vol. III, Feb. 7, 1919; Feb. 19, 1919.
111. Vol. III, Feb. 19, 1919.
112. Ibid.
113. Vol. III, facing p. 35, 1921; see also p. 37.
114. Vol. IV, Pacific Dairy Review,
Dec. 12, 1924.
115. Vol. IV, Jan. 9, 1925.
116. Vol. IV, *ibid.*; Dec. 12, 1924.
117. Vol. IV, Nov. 1925 (see pp. 12, 21-23);
Nov. 15, 1926.
118. Vol. IV, facing p. 75; March 10, 1933;
Oct. 23, 1933; Nov. 16, 1934.
119. Vol. IV, Nov. 7, 1935.
120. Vol. IV, Nov. 17, 1937.

121. Vol. IV, Nov. 14, 1941.
122. Vol. IV, Feb. 1942 (see p. 132).
123. Vol. IV, "Report of Association Activities 1944," op. cit.
124. Vol. V, April 28, 1948.
125. Vol. V, Dec. 3-4, 1948.
126. Vol. V, Jan. 13, 1949.
127. Vol. V, Dec. 2-3, 1949.
128. Vol. V, Sept. 7, 1949.
129. Vol. VI, Oct. 14, 1952.
130. Vol. VI, Jan. 16, 1953.
131. Vol. VI, March 25, 1953;
May 12, 1953.
132. Vol. VI, Sept. 28, 1958.
133. Vol. VIII, Jan. 16-17, 1964;
Vol. IX, Feb. 3, 1968.
134. Vol. IX, March 26, 1968.
135. Vol. X, June 9, 1970.
136. Vol. V, Dec. 17, 1946.
137. Vol. V, Dec. 5-6, 1947.
138. Vol. V, Dec. 9, 1950.
139. Vol. VI, Nov. 13, 1952
(Newsletter, p. 1).

140. Vol. VI, Oct. 20, 1953, "Report of the Price Support Study Committee."
141. Vol. VI, March 10, 1954;
April 30, 1956; June 24, 1955.
142. Vol. VI, Feb. 10, 1956, "Report of the Economic Study Committee."
143. Vol. VI, Feb. 14, 1957, "Report of the Price Support Study Committee."
144. Vol. VII, Jan. 30, 1961, "Bulletin."
145. Vol. VII, various dates 1962.
146. Los Angeles Times,
Sept. 11, 1962, p. 6.
147. Vol. VIII, Feb. 26, 1963.
148. Discussion between the author and the CCOA Board of Directors, October, 1983.