

MATCOM

■ CROP COLLECTION

a learning element for staff of agricultural cooperatives

international labour office, geneva

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by Malcolm Harper



MATCOM
Material and techniques for cooperatives management training

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In collaboration with cooperative organizations and training institutes in all regions of the world, MATCOM designs and produces material for the training of managers of cooperatives and assists in the preparation of adapted versions for use in various countries. MATCOM also provides support for improving the methodology of cooperative training and for the training of trainers.

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CROP COLLECTION

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HOW TO LEARN

- Study the Element carefully.

- Write down answers to all the questions in the Element. This will help you not only to learn, but also to apply the knowledge in your work at a later stage.

- After studying the Element on your own, discuss it with your instructor and colleagues, then take part in practical exercises organised by your instructor.

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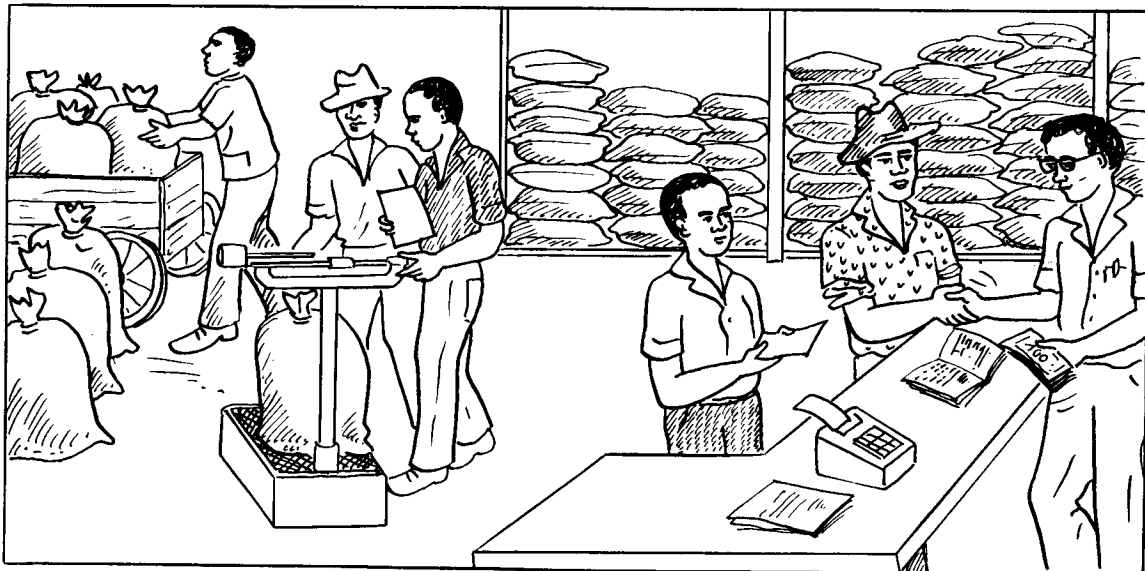
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INTRODUCTION

What is the most important part of your job as manager of a co-operative society? If the main business of your society is the marketing of crops for your members, you may think that dealing with the people who buy the crops is most important. You have to negotiate prices with them, arrange transport, check on quality and make certain you get paid. It is a big job, and your success is what makes your society prosper.

Yet, you may actually spend more time dealing with day-to-day administration of the co-operative and its staff. This is also very important.

What do the members think about your job? What is your most important task as far as they are concerned?



The members have their most important contact with you when they turn over their crops to you for sale. At this point they entrust you with the result of their whole season's hard work. No doubt they consider "receiving the produce" to be your most important job. Even small problems in this vital area can "sour" their feelings about their co-operative and its management.

All kinds of things can go wrong in the collection and receiving process.

- Members do not have their crops ready on time.
- Members have no bags or other packing for their crops.
- The transport does not collect the crops as arranged.
- Perishable crops deteriorate because they are not dealt with quickly enough.
- Crops owned by various members are confused and not paid for correctly.
- Members mistrust or do not understand weighing or grading methods.
- Payment is delayed or insufficient.

You probably have many other examples. Look at this list, however, and identify the various tasks which make up any collection and receiving system, whether it be for milk, fresh vegetables, grain or anything else.

1. Harvest
2. Packing
3. Transport to receiving point
4. Weighing
5. Grading
6. Valuing
7. Paying

If you can design and manage a good collection and receiving system covering all these tasks, you will greatly enhance your society's reputation among its members.

?

1. Read the list of things that can go wrong in the collection and receiving process again. Which of these problems occur in your own co-operative, occasionally or regularly?

MANAGEMENT CHOICES

Think for a moment about the way your society's collection and receiving system is organised:

- Who harvests the crops?
- Who transports the crops?
- Who provides packaging if it is needed?
- How and when are members paid?

Why are these tasks, and all the others involved in the system, done the way they are?

Many things in co-operatives and other organisations are done "because that's how it's always been done", or "because that's what most societies do", or "because that's the only way it could be done".

If you were trying to improve operations in another society handling a crop quite different from your own, would you be satisfied with such explanations, or would you dig deeper and try to find out whether the existing way really was the best?

What basic choices are there in each of the seven stages listed in the first chapter?

Harvest - Members do it.
 - The society does it.

Packing - The members provide it.
 - The society provides it.

Transport - Members provide it themselves.
 - The society hires a contractor to provide it.
 - The society provides it with its own vehicles.

Weighing, Grading and Valuing

- The members observe it.
- The members rely entirely on the society and do not observe it.

- Paying
- Cash on delivery.
 - Cash at a later date.
 - Cheques at a later date.

You may think that whatever your society does is the only way. Consider that:

- many sugar cane societies harvest members' crops for them;
- many dairy societies collect milk from their members every day;
- many societies provide sacks or other containers to their members;
- members in many societies leave weighing, grading and valuation entirely to the society, while in others members are permitted and encouraged to observe every detail of the procedure;
- many societies pay in cash or by cheque on delivery, while others keep members waiting for months.

Clearly, there are many variations in crop collection methods. You should think about your society's system as if you were just setting it up and there were no other societies marketing similar crops whose methods you could copy. What are the three most important factors which determine how you should organise your collection and receiving system?

What questions should you ask about each of these?

1. The crop :

- Is it perishable or durable? (E.g. milk versus potatoes.)

- Is it robust or delicate? (E.g. maize versus tomatoes.)
- Is it low in value or high? (E.g. cabbage versus honey.)
- Is it harvested over a long or a short period of time? (E.g. tea versus sugar cane.)

2. The members :

- Are they well informed or ignorant?
- Are they very poor or fairly well off?
- Are they scattered or concentrated?

3. The local facilities :

- Are roads good or bad?
- Are communications easy or difficult?
- Are there alternative ways of selling the crop?

2. Answer each of the above questions for your own situation. How will your answers affect your decisions on each of the choices listed earlier, with regard to harvest, packing, transport, weighing, grading and paying?

For example:

If the crop is very perishable, who should transport it? - The society.

If the crop is of low value, who should provide packaging? - The members.

If the members are very poor, how should they be paid? - In cash on delivery.

Look at the answers you have reached. Does your system do as you suggest, or is it different in some way? Should it be changed? Why?



THE COST OF COLLECTION

Your job as a manager is to keep costs as low as possible. If you succeed, your members benefit and their society prospers.

If you have to choose between these two collection systems, which would you prefer?

System A: One central collection point costing T\$5,000* a year to run.

System B: Ten village collection points costing T\$1,000 each to run.

It appears obvious that you would be saving the society money if you chose System A, costing T\$5,000, rather than System B, costing ten times T\$1,000, or T\$10,000. Is it, in fact, as simple as all that?

Put yourself in the position of a member faced with a similar choice:

System A: It will cost you T\$20 to deliver your crops to the Central Collection Point.

System B: It will cost you only T\$5 to deliver your crop to one of the Village Collection Points, because it is much nearer to your home.

Clearly, as a member, you would choose System B, since it costs you T\$5 rather than T\$20. It may cost the society more but you are most concerned about how much money you are going to have to pay, out of your own pocket.

How can you as a manager decide what is really best for the society as a whole? Your objective is to keep total costs as

* We use an imaginary currency here, because this booklet is used in many countries. We call it "Training dollars" (T\$).

low as possible. This includes costs which are paid by the co-operative society and by its members. If there were 400 members in your society, and you had to make the decision between Systems A and B, how would you do it?

System A:	Society's costs	T\$ 5,000
	Members' costs 400 x T\$20	<u>8,000</u>
	Total	<u>T\$ 13,000</u>

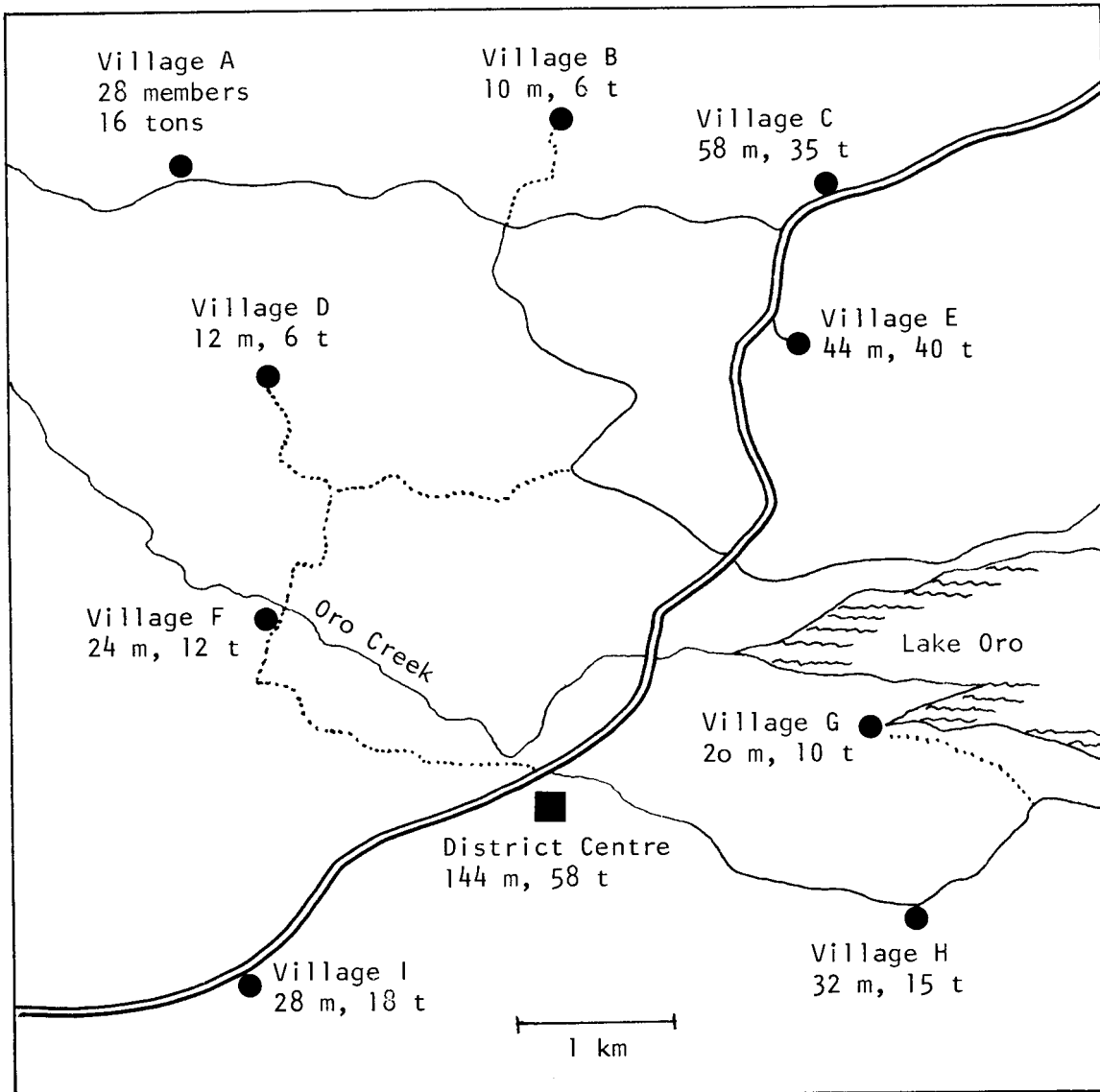
System B:	Society's costs 10 x T\$1,000	T\$ 10,000
	Members' costs 400 x T\$5	<u>2,000</u>
		<u>T\$ 12,000</u>

System B costs the least in total, and is therefore the alternative you should choose.

This calculation is quite simple, if you have the right information.

- Do you know how much it costs your society to run its collection points?
- Do you know how much it costs each member, on average, to transport his crop to the collection point nearest to his farm?
- Have you ever considered an alternative to your present system?
- Can you draw a sketch map of your society's area, with member numbers and crop data, like the sketch on the next page?

If you can answer "Yes" to all four questions, you can easily find out whether your present system is best. If not, you should obtain the information, and look very carefully at what you are doing.



The locations of the collection points also influence the costs. Which of the following is the right way to select places for collection points?

1. You mark on a map the volume of crops produced in each area and place the collection points so that each will take in an approximately equal amount.
2. You look at the roads and tracks on a map and choose places which are easy for vehicles to reach from the central storage point.
3. You note the number of members living in each area on a map and locate the collection points so that each serves approximately the same number of members.

What might be wrong with each of these solutions?

1. Members are unlikely to produce identical amounts of crops. If collection points are located according to volume, those producing the smallest amounts will have to travel furthest. They are probably the least able to afford it.
2. The best roads may not lead to members' farms at all. The most convenient transport route may be very inconvenient for members.
3. Some centres might serve members with very low production. The cost of collecting crops there is likely to be very high because those centres will receive so little, while others are likely to be over-burdened.

None of these methods is ideal. As a manager, you will have to seek a compromise, or balance, which takes all three factors into account:

- the need to serve all the members, and not just the biggest producers;
- the need to minimise transport costs from the collection point to the central storage point;
- the need to keep the cost of collection as low as possible.

3. Suggest how you might improve your present collection system by changing the number of collection points or the location of some of them. Then calculate how your proposal would affect the cost of collection for the co-operative society and for the members.



THE EFFICIENT USE OF TRANSPORT

The next time you travel by road, look at the trucks and tractors which pass.

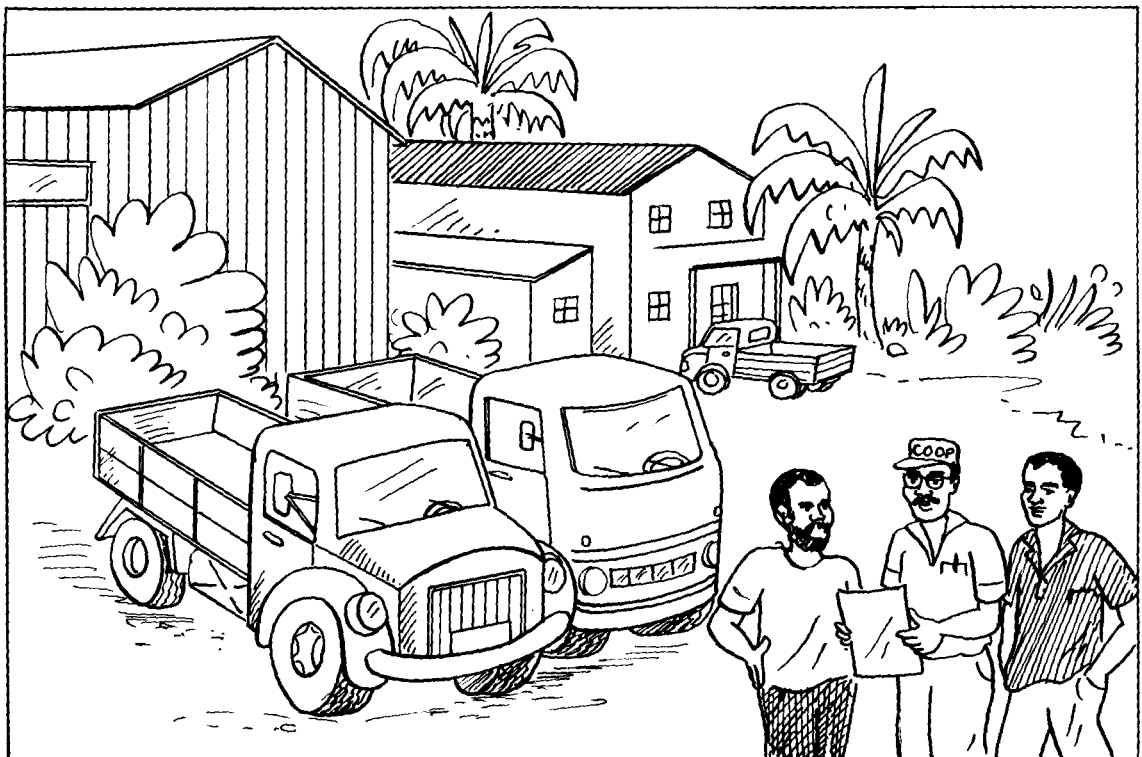
- Is every one fully loaded?

Think about the vehicles that your society owns.

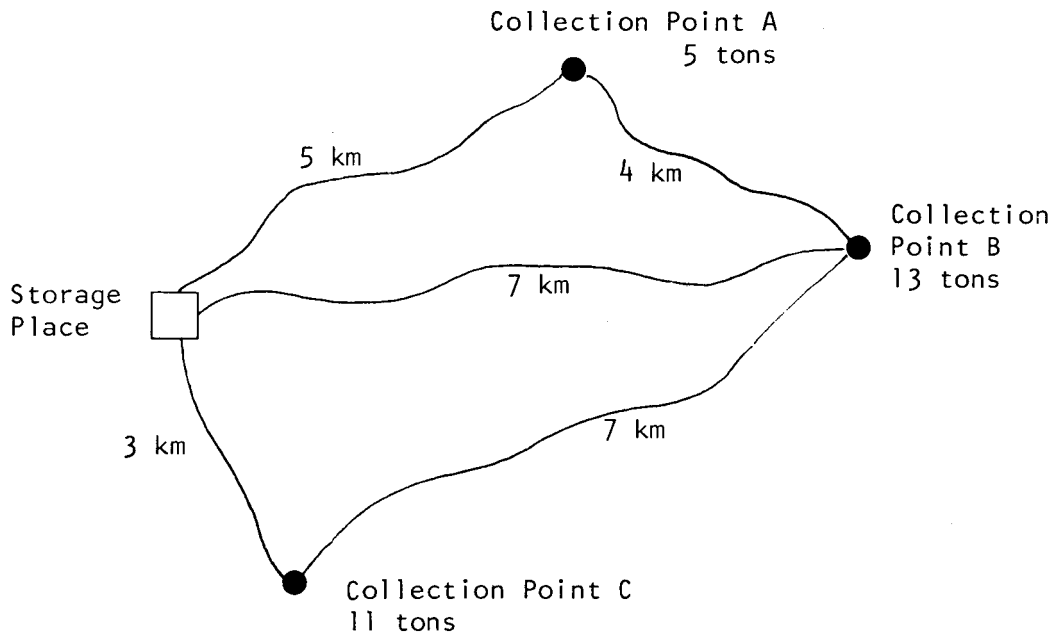
- Are they all in working order and being used as economically as they can be?

Managers often complain that they need more vehicles but they rarely make effective use of what they have. Can this be said of you?

You may have little control over the location of crop collection centres or of your society's headquarters. Every manager, however, can decide how his vehicles operate. However carefully collection points are located, all the effort is wasted if the vehicles are not correctly scheduled.



Look at the following simplified map of a co-operative area. It has a central storage place and three collection points from which members' crops must be brought to the centre. How would you organise the transport, if you had one 10-ton truck and there were 5 tons to be collected from Point A, 13 tons from Point B and 11 tons from Point C?



Would this be the most effective way?

- First journey to collect the whole crop from Point A. Second journey to collect 10 tons from Point B. Third journey to collect 10 tons from Point C. Fourth journey to collect the remaining 3 tons from Point B and 1 ton from Point C.

Clearly it would not. The following would be more economical:

- First journey to collect 5 tons from Point A and 5 tons from Point B. Second journey to collect the remaining 8 tons from Point B and 2 tons from Point C. Third journey to collect the remaining 9 tons from Point C.

This problem and its solution may look very obvious on paper.

- Do you have a map or an approximate sketch showing the location of and distance between the points from which crops must be collected and the central point to which they must be brought?
- Do you know about how much will have to be collected at each point?
- Do you plan the routes of your vehicles in advance, in order to minimise the distance they travel?

Transport is probably the worst managed aspect of many co-operative societies. The extra costs, long delays and resulting problems can easily turn a surplus into a loss.

Careful planning of transport routes helps to keep costs down and it also means another great advantage: members can be notified well in advance, so that they will bring their crops to the right place at the right time.

- Have your members ever had to make two trips to a collection point, because they lacked adequate information about transport the first time?
- Have crops ever deteriorated or been stolen because they were not collected at the expected time?
- Have your vehicles ever gone to collect crops, only to find that they were not yet ready?



4. Write down some realistic suggestions on how to increase efficiency and reduce costs of transport in your co-operative.

KEEPING MEMBERS INFORMED

Transport problems can be avoided by careful planning, but it is also necessary to keep members informed about those plans. How can this be done?

Read the information below carefully for not more than ten seconds - then turn the page. Do not take notes and do not look at the sign again until you are asked to do so:

GAMMA COOP

CROP COLLECTION

TIME: 7·00 a.m. TO 12·00 noon
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7th.

PLACE: KILOMETRE STONE 15
ON
PROVINCIAL HIGHWAY 3

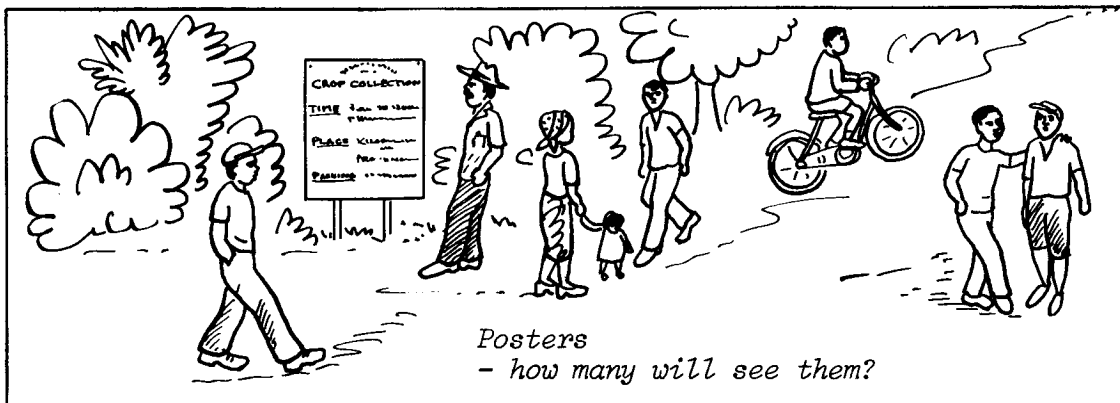
PACKING: 50 KILOGRAM SACKS

The information you have just read was printed on a poster. What different ways are there of notifying members about collection arrangements, meetings or anything else?

- Posters
- Leaflets or letters
- Radio announcements
- Newspaper advertisements
- Meetings
- Visits to individual members
- Asking members to inform one another (the "word of mouth" method)

There are certain disadvantages with each method. For instance, written information - whether on posters, in leaflets or in newspapers - might not reach illiterate members. Others simply may not see it.

"Information"



Verbal information has other disadvantages. Radio and newspaper advertisements are often either unavailable or too expensive. Meetings are often not fully attended. Individual visits take too long and cost too much. Word of mouth communication can be inaccurate and is always slow.

No single method is ideal. The task of information, like transport arrangements and everything else in management, must be planned. A combination of methods must be used depending on:

- the time available;
- member literacy and access to information sources;
- where members live;
- the money available;
- the degree of detail needed.

5.1 Now, without looking back, try to write down the information that you just read on the poster on page 15.

Then, compare your notes with the poster. You are most unlikely to have remembered the details correctly.



5.2 As a manager, you must make sure that you send out correct information so that members can make good use of your arrangements.

Describe a situation where you failed to give adequate information to your members. What will you do to avoid similar problems in the future?



THE RECEIVING PROCESS

It may seem simple to organise the actual receiving of produce from your members. All you have to do is weigh and grade the crops and make sure that the members are credited with the proper value. In fact, it is not all that easy.



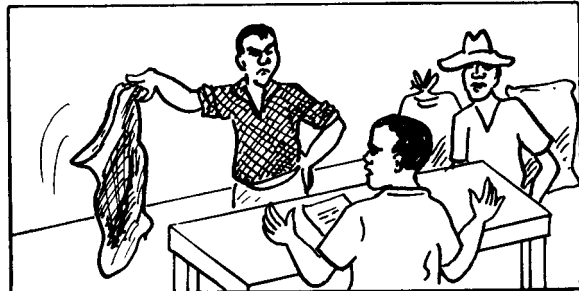
- Do your members ever have to wait a long time to deliver their crops?

- Have one member's crops ever been mixed up with another's, leading to confusion, arguments and delays?



- Have mistakes ever been made in calculations?

- Are there ever disputes over bags or other containers?



- Have any members ever cheated the society by overstating crop weight or value?

- Have any staff ever cheated members by under-stating crop weight or quality?

There are very few societies where problems of this kind have never occurred. Even if you believe they have not in yours, you cannot be certain. It may not be possible to prevent them altogether, but they can be minimised by careful planning of the receiving operation.

Containers

Containers - sacks, bags, etc. - may seem relatively unimportant, but they can cause a lot of problems. You can avoid these by carefully considering the following questions, in terms of local conditions:

- Who should buy the containers, the members or the society?
- Who should be responsible for container quality?
- How should lost or damaged containers be accounted for?

The answers will differ from one society to another. In general it is better:

- to make members responsible for buying and maintaining whatever packages are required;
- to return containers to members immediately after crop delivery for necessary repairs, storage and re-use.

This may not be possible if crops have to be stored or re-sold in the same containers. However, it is better for the society to sell members the containers and then credit the cost on delivery rather than get involved with the problems of free issue, responsibility for damage, and so on.

Organising the reception

Once the packaging questions are settled, you must decide exactly what has to be done at the receiving point, listing each operation and how long it takes. For a co-operative marketing grain crops, the list might read as follows:

Test moisture:	5 minutes per member
Weigh:	average 10 minutes per member
Grade:	3 minutes per member
Calculate value:	4 minutes per member
Pay cash:	2 minutes per member

Can you "break down" the process in your own society listing the steps and an approximate time estimate? Without this information, it is impossible to plan the operation successfully.

Now you have three things to decide:

- In what order the operations will be carried out.
- How the whole receiving operation will be physically laid out.
- How many staff will be employed for the operations.

What order?

The various operations in receiving produce were listed on page 19. You must now determine their sequence.

Clearly, calculation and payment should come last. What about the other three?

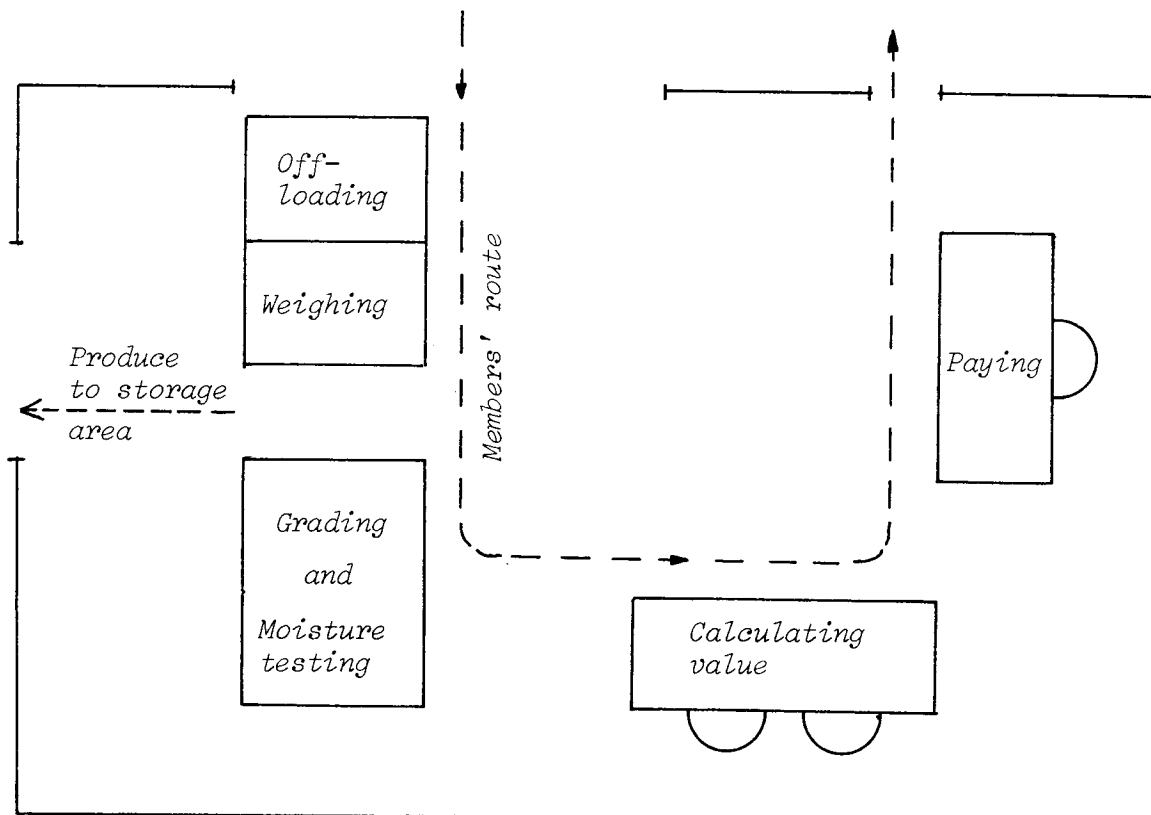
- Weighing should probably come first, because subsequent checks involve removing some of the produce, and members may complain if their produce is weighed after the samples have been removed.
- Lengthy operations should probably come last, to avoid wasting time on crops which will then be rejected for other reasons. Moisture testing should probably come last.

You therefore have the following order:

- ① Weigh
- ② Grade
- ③ Test moisture
- ④ Calculate value
- ⑤ Pay

Layout

When you have decided the most suitable sequence for the operations, you can plan the physical layout of the system. The different "stations" must be placed in a logical way so that members need not carry their crops to and fro, back-tracking and causing general confusion in the place. Here is one suggestion:



- The produce does not clutter up the system. It is removed immediately after weighing (except for the sample taken for grading).
- Members themselves pass in an orderly way around the system.

6. Draw a simple sketch-plan of your own system. Explain how it might be improved by following the simple planning approach we have just gone through.



How many staff?

You have to decide how many staff to employ for receiving members' crops. What information do you need before you can do this?

- The number of members.
- The time available for the operation.

Assume that there are 400 members, and that the crop must all be dealt with in three days. The centre will be open from 6.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Now try to work out how many staff will be needed for each operation. (You will find it easier if you start with the slowest operation.)

One answer is as follows:

Weigh:	10 minutes/member, 3 staff = 18 members/hour.
Grade:	3 minutes/member, 1 staff = 20 members/hour.
Test moisture:	5 minutes/member, 2 staff = 24 members/hour.
Calculate value:	4 minutes/member, 2 staff = 30 members/hour.
Pay out:	2 minutes/member, 1 <u>staff</u> = 30 members/hour.
Total	9 staff

The calculation and payment staff will both be able to deal with members rather faster than the earlier operations which precede them. Why is this an advantage?

- It will avoid "traffic jams" in the processing line, since members whose crops have been weighed, graded and moisture tested will be able to proceed straight to calculations and payment.
- It will avoid excessive pressure on calculation and payment staff, where mistakes can easily occur.
- It will ensure that only one person is making payments, and that he or she is not involved in any other operation. This minimises opportunities for staff dishonesty.

INSPECTION

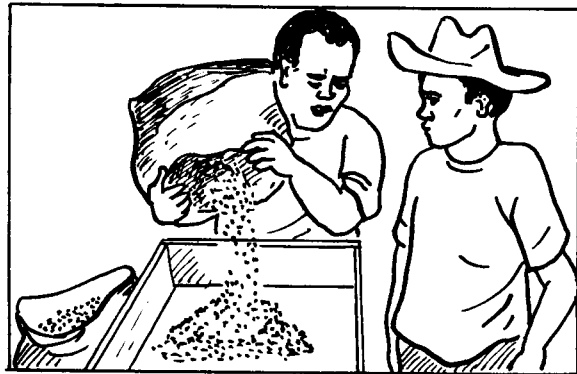
When your members bring their crops to your society, do you accept whatever they bring, regardless of quality? This is most unlikely:

- milk may be watered;
- vegetables may be rotten;
- grain may be infested with vermin.

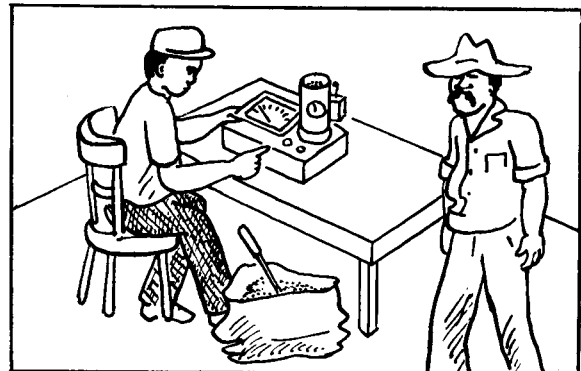
How do you decide what to accept or reject? What method do you use?

- Do you take a quick look at the crop and judge whether or not it is up to standard?
- Do you carry out some form of scientific test on the crop?

Visual inspection is quick, cheap and easy to understand, but it may be inaccurate. It is based on personal opinion which may be disputed.



Scientific tests are accurate and cannot easily be influenced by personal judgement, but are often slow and may require expensive equipment and specially-trained staff.

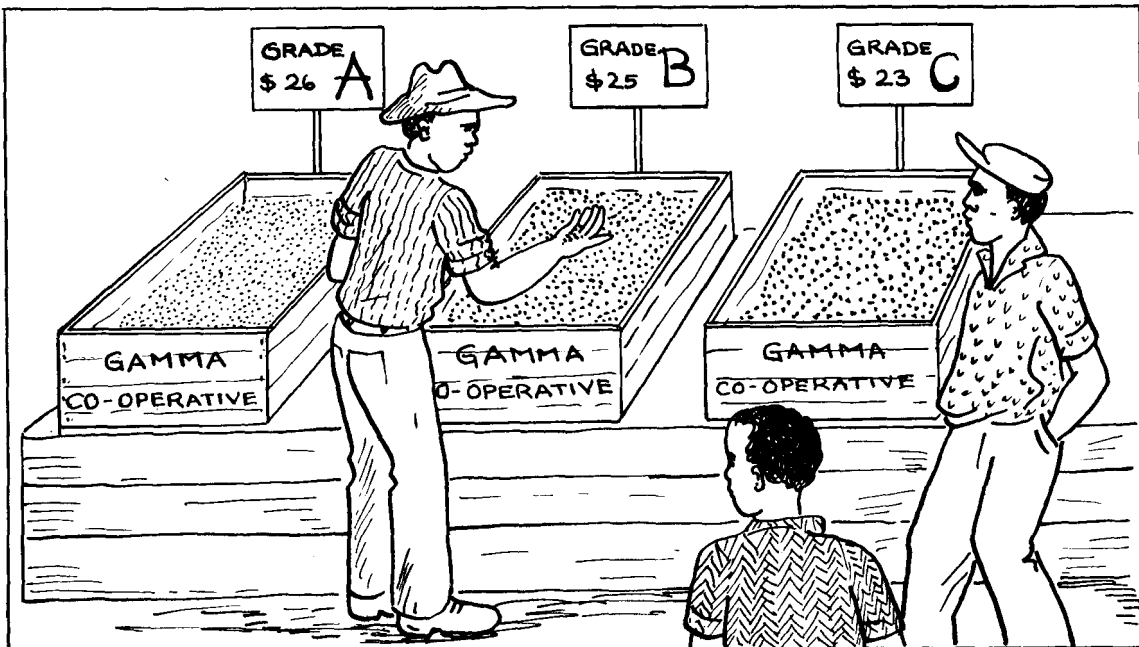


As with all problems of management, you have to decide on a compromise or middle way. This section should help you.

Grading

Some co-operatives inspect crops only to determine whether they should be accepted or rejected. In other societies, depending upon the crop, the prices paid to members vary according to the quality of the crop, so that even accepted produce must be graded to determine the price. Why is this done?

- The society's customers may not pay the same price for every grade. The prices members receive should reflect this otherwise those who produce quality crops are penalised.
- Members should be encouraged by the pricing system to upgrade the quality of what they produce.



Does your society pay members the same for all crops, regardless of quality? If so, you should consider whether it might not serve your customers better, and therefore also be in your members' interest, to introduce a scale of prices for different grades.

You may only look for one particular sign of quality when you inspect the crops, but in fact there are many different

indicators of quality and a number of ways to measure it:

- Smell
- Appearance
- Moisture content
- Size of item
- Proportion of broken items
- Colour
- Hardness
- Proportion of impurities
- Chemical composition



7.1 In the above list, find the standard by which you measure the quality of your crops and describe how you measure it.
Is it the only way, or best way?

All the features can be measured in at least two ways. One is simple, quick and inaccurate, such as taste or visual inspection; the other is usually complex, slow and accurate. As co-operatives develop and improve the quality of what they sell, they often have to move from simple methods, involving only acceptance or rejection, to more complicated scientific methods, allowing a variety of standards. You should be familiar with the more scientific methods of crop inspection in order to decide when and if you should "move up" to using them.

Major arguments against scientific tests are that they can be slow and expensive, and may even destroy the produce tested. How can you partly overcome these disadvantages, in order to gain the benefits of more precise and objective inspection?

Sampling

One way would be to "sample". Rather than checking every bag in a member's delivery you select a smaller sample for inspection, assuming that this will give you a true picture of the quality of the whole batch. But how can you select a

proper sample? The following example should show you how.

If you wanted to know how many of your members were over 50 years old you could ask each individually. You would get an accurate answer, but questioning all members would take a long time. If you were in a hurry, you could ask just a few of them, or a sample. Consider the following situation:

Total membership = 1,000

Size of sample = 10

Number over 50 years old in the sample = 2

2 out of 10 is 20%, therefore 20% of 1,000, or 200, are over 50 years old.

Why might the conclusion be wrong?

- You might have asked too few members; your sample might be too small.
- You might have asked members who were not typical of all the members.

Therefore, when you inspect crops, you have to be careful to select a sample of the right size, and you have to make sure that the items you inspect are typical of the whole delivery.

If a member brought in 50 bags of maize, for instance, and you wanted to check it for moisture content, how would you decide how much maize to check, and where to take a sample from?

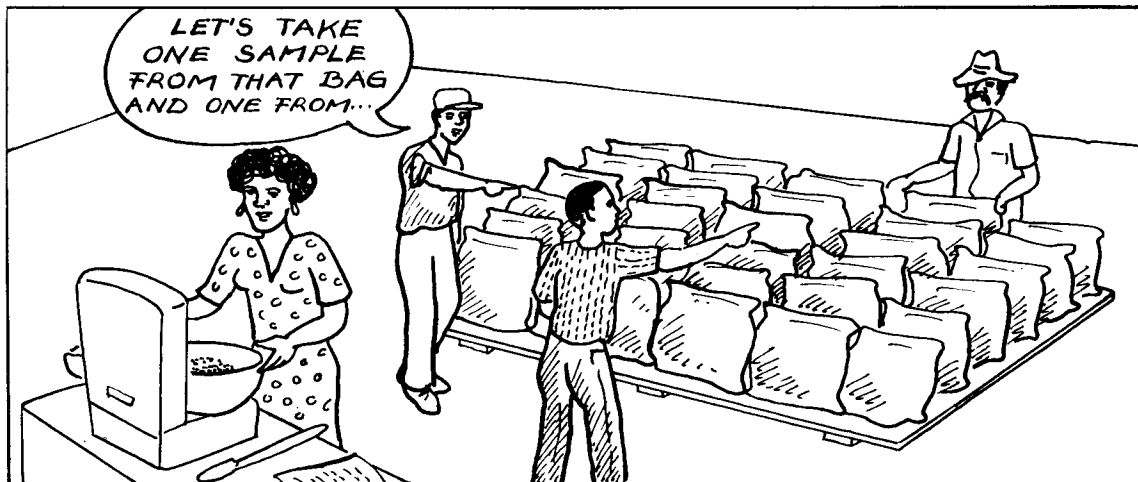
- The quantity would depend on how long you expect the inspection to take, but it would probably be reasonable to take samples from two or three bags.
- It would be even more accurate to take samples from different places, not just from the top of the bags,

and from bags you select, not just bags the members offer you. You could not be sure of taking a typical sample this way, but you would be even less sure if you chose the samples only from the tops of bags offered by the member.

What and how much you check and the way you choose it will depend on:

- the size of the farmer's delivery;
- the importance of avoiding mistakes;
- the time and costs of carrying out the check.

What is important is that you choose the most suitable method and sample size for your society, taking into consideration the kind of crops and the needs of your customers.



Whatever your method and sample size, it is most important that your members understand and agree with what you are doing.

Remember that the results of your inspection may determine the level of their income for the whole year. How can you foster that understanding and agreement, particularly if you are trying to introduce a new method of inspection?

- Explain the method clearly to members at meetings and similar occasions before crop deliveries begin.

- Train your inspection staff not only to choose and inspect samples correctly, but also to explain to members what they are doing and why.
- Allow enough time, and staff, for members to have a chance to observe and understand the process, rather than being so hurried that they have no chance to ask questions or to query the results.



7.2 Write up detailed step-by-step instructions (a "checklist") for the inspection of produce in your co-operative. The following points, among others, should be covered:

- how to choose the sample (size and selection);
- how to inspect the sample (visually or using testing equipment);
- how to handle the testing instruments;
- how to assess the produce (grading classes, standards);
- what to do in the case of poor quality sample;
- how to deal with the members.

RECORDS AND SECURITY

What do your members and staff think of the various forms and paperwork required as part of the collection and receiving system? If you asked them, would they say something like this?

Members: "A lot of nonsense which delays the whole process of handing over our crop and getting paid."

Staff: "Boring formalities which cause us lots of work."

Imagine what would happen if the system operated without any paperwork at all. What sort of problems would arise?

- The whole system would depend not only on people's memory but also on their honesty. With no records, members would not be paid correctly, because crop quality and quantity might be forgotten - or dishonestly misrepresented.

It is obvious that some paperwork is necessary. It must be designed so that all - and only - essential information is safely recorded. Furthermore, the system should be quick and easy to maintain. Unfortunately, many systems are not ideal for their purposes. Why is this so?

- They may have been poorly designed from the beginning.
- Many changes may have been made as new circumstances arose, making the modified system unnecessarily cumbersome.
- Out-dated documents may have survived even though they are no longer needed.

Unless your own system is very new or very unusual, it is almost certain to have suffered in this way. Some parts of it are almost certain to be unnecessary, while other parts no longer achieve their objectives.



8. Get a copy of each document used in your society's collecting and receiving system, including both lists and schedules for internal use and all documents which are given to members.

Look at a typical document, such as the receipt given to members when they hand over their crops.

- Is the document itself necessary? What would happen if it were not used at all?
- Is every item on the document necessary?
- Is every copy actually used?
- Is the document as simple and easy to understand as it could be?
- Is anything recorded twice when a single entry or a carbon copy would do?
- Does the document minimise the risk of mistakes or fraud?
- Does the document allow sufficient space - neither too much nor too little - for all the figures or words likely to be needed?

Now go through the same set of questions for all the other forms in your crop receiving system.

After a thorough review of your forms, you will probably find that you can dispose of some copies, entries or even entire documents, and that you may have to add others. Remember that unnecessary entries do more than waste time; the more people have to write, the less accurate they tend to become.

The system you use obviously depends on such factors as the crop you collect, the literacy of your members and the skill

- This form is designed for three "stations" in the receiving process: testing/grading, weighing and paying. Each operation is endorsed by signatures of staff and member.
- Is this more or less complicated than your own society's system?
- If you used such a form for your own society, with copies for both member and society, would you need any further documents?

You may need more information or more copies. Remember, however, that paperwork should be kept to a minimum. You must test every document, every copy and every entry, by asking:

- What difference would it make if this were omitted?

“CHECK-OUT”

To prove to yourself that you have fully understood this Element, you should now answer the following questions. Then check your answers by referring to the pages indicated. If you have problems with a particular question, go back and read the corresponding chapter again.



	Ref. page
1. What is the most important transaction between a farmer and his co-operative society?	3
2. What specific tasks are included in the process of collecting and receiving produce from the members in a co-operative?	4
3. Which are the most common problems in the collection and receiving work?	4
4. How can the transport of produce from members' farms to the co-operative be organised? State three possibilities.	5
5. How can the payment to farmers be made? State three possibilities.	6
6. How should the costs of collection be calculated?	8-10
7. What should be the basis for decisions about the location of collection points?	10-11
8. Why is the planning of transport routes and loads so important?	14

	Ref. page
9. What methods can be used for informing members as to collection arrangements?	16
10. Which information methods are cheapest and which are slowest?	17
11. What is the best system for provision of containers (bags) for the produce? Who should be responsible for purchase and maintenance of the containers?	19
12. What "steps" are involved in the actual reception process at the receiving points?	19
13. In what order should those steps be performed at the receiving points?	20
14. Why is it necessary to inspect the crop delivered to the co-operative?	23
15. What are the disadvantages of visual inspection of crops?	23
16. Why is it often best to grade the produce and pay according to quality?	24
17. What indicators are used to determine the quality of the produce?	25
18. What is meant by sampling?	25-26
19. What is important to remember when taking a sample for inspection?	27-28
20. What are the most important features of a good paperwork system?	30

COMPLEMENTARY EXERCISES

To complete your studies of this topic, you should take part in some of the following exercises, applying what you have learnt to real situations.



1. Study a crop collection system

Make a study of the crop collection in a society during the actual collection period:

- a Note what preparations have been done by the manager prior to the collection period.
- b Note how members have been informed about collection arrangements.
- c Study the procedures at the receiving point, noting the sequence of operations, the average time for each operation, the waiting time for members and the working hours and breaks for staff.
- d Interview several members about problems they encountered on collection days.
- e Interview staff about their working conditions and problems they encountered in the work.
- f Make up a report of your findings and recommendations as to how the receiving and collection system could be improved. Present the report to the management for discussion and possible action.

2. Study one specific operation

Select one specific operation which is cumbersome at present (e.g. grading of produce or paperwork). Discuss possible solutions with members and staff and present your ideas as to how procedures could be improved.

MATCOM TRAINING MATERIAL

Have you studied these other MATCOM "Learning Elements" for staff of agricultural co-operatives?

- Basic Economics of an Agricultural Co-operative
- The Budget
- Supply Services

MATCOM has also designed a comprehensive six-day course on "Collecting and Receiving Agricultural Produce", as well as several other courses for managers of agricultural co-operatives.

The Trainer's Manuals for the following courses are available from ILO:

- Management of Larger Agricultural Co-operatives
- Collecting and Receiving Agricultural Produce
- Transport Management
- Storage Management
- Marketing of Agricultural Produce
- Supply Management
- Rural Savings and Credit Schemes
- Work Planning
- Staff Management
- Project Preparation and Appraisal
- Financial Management
- Cost Accounting and Control
- Risk Management
- Export Marketing

Inquiries and orders for MATCOM training material should be sent to:

The MATCOM Project
c/o COOP Branch
International Labour Office
CH 1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland.