

Agroborealis

Volume 9, Number 2; July/1977

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**Agricultural Experiment Station
University of Alaska**

From The Director's Desk

This year home gardeners and commercial producers of grains, vegetables, meat, and milk have once again demonstrated Alaska's substantial potential for food production. This experience and the results of 78 years of agricultural research in Alaska continue to document the biological capability of the state to produce abundant yields of adapted crops and livestock.

Yet Alaskans are forced to rely on agricultural products imported from other states and foreign countries to provide more than 95% of their food requirements. Moreover, Alaska's meager agricultural production provides employment opportunities for relatively few people within the state. And food prices for Alaskans continue to escalate irrespective of surpluses or shortages of agricultural commodities in the Lower 48.

Nevertheless, Alaska has substantial advantages for agricultural production:

- Alaska has 20 million acres of land that can produce high yields of adapted crops.
- Alaska has energy resources for the production and processing of food.
- Alaska has surplus industrial heat from power plants and pipeline pumping stations that can be used in crop production and processing.
- Alaska has an enormous protein source in the form of by-products from its fishing industry that can be used as protein supplements in livestock feed.

If Alaska is to develop an economic base through something other than extractive resources, agricultural production and processing must be expanded in the state. Potential agricultural land owned by the state and federal governments must be made available in sufficiently large units for farmers to farm. Businesses that provide the goods and services for agricultural production, and the facilities and services for processing agricultural products, must be established and expanded. The production, processing and marketing components of agriculture must be enlarged to create the "critical mass" necessary for a viable economic system.

Alaska has the technological, financial, and organizational capabilities to develop agriculture successfully. A commitment within the state to utilize these capabilities can establish agriculture as a viable part of Alaska's economy and future well-being.

James V. Drew, Director



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July/1977

Volume 9

Number 2

Alaska
Agriculture Experiment Station
School of Agriculture and Land
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Agroborealis is published under the leadership of the AES Publications Committee: J. V. Drew, A. L. Brundage, L. J. Klebesadel, C. E. Logsdon, J. D. McKendrick and W. C. Thomas.

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Printed by Northern Printing Co., Inc.,
Anchorage, Alaska

Agroborealis is published by the University of Alaska Agricultural Experiment Station, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. A written request will include you on the mailing list. The Agricultural Experiment Station at the University of Alaska provides station publications and equal educational and employment opportunities to all without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, physical handicap, or veteran status.

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ABOUT THE COVER . . .

Potato production is ideally suited to Alaska's long days and cool temperatures. A lack of processing facilities, however, limits Alaskan potatoes to the fresh market, and Alaskans must pay to import millions of pounds of frozen and dehydrated potatoes and potato chips each year. These potatoes are growing at the Bernard Vander Weele farm near Palmer.

Photo by Gary Michaelson



Agriculture is Business . . .

Introduction

To many people, agriculture means the production of food and fiber, and therefore, agriculture is limited to our farms and forests. To most urban people, food comes from the supermarket, clothing comes from department stores, and housing comes from the lumber yard. Each of these viewpoints fails to regard the supply of food, clothing and shelter as a totally integrated system consuming the time and energy of at least 40% of the nation's workforce; massive quantities of the nation's energy supply, water resources, transportation network; and large amounts of steel and rubber. Supplying the nation with its food, clothing, and shelter is the largest single industry.

The implications for Alaska are quite interesting. When asked about agriculture in Alaska, most people would reply that it is a very small part of Alaska's economy. It is true that Alaska's farmers produce less than 5% of the food consumed in the state. It is true that in spite of the massive forest resources in Alaska, the majority of the forest products produced are shipped out of the state and do not enter the local market. But to say that the agricultural industry overall is unimportant in Alaska is to ignore that Alaskans, like everyone else in the United States, are fed, clothed, and housed by the agricultural system.

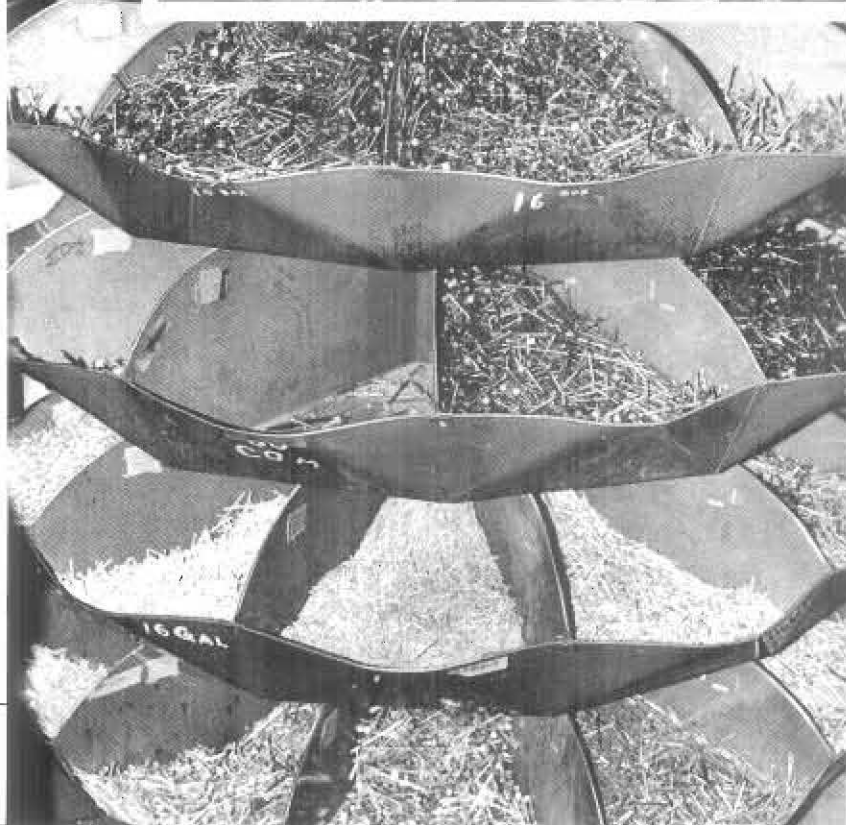
Production of food within Alaska is limited. Processing of agricultural products, with the exception of primary processing of pulp at Ketchikan and Sitka, is almost nonexistent. The service and supply sector is barely adequate for the amount of production. But the rest of the agricultural system that it takes to feed, clothe, and house our 400,000 people is as sophisticated as anywhere else in the world. Agriculture is not just farming, agriculture is also business.

Charles E. Logsdon
Associate Director

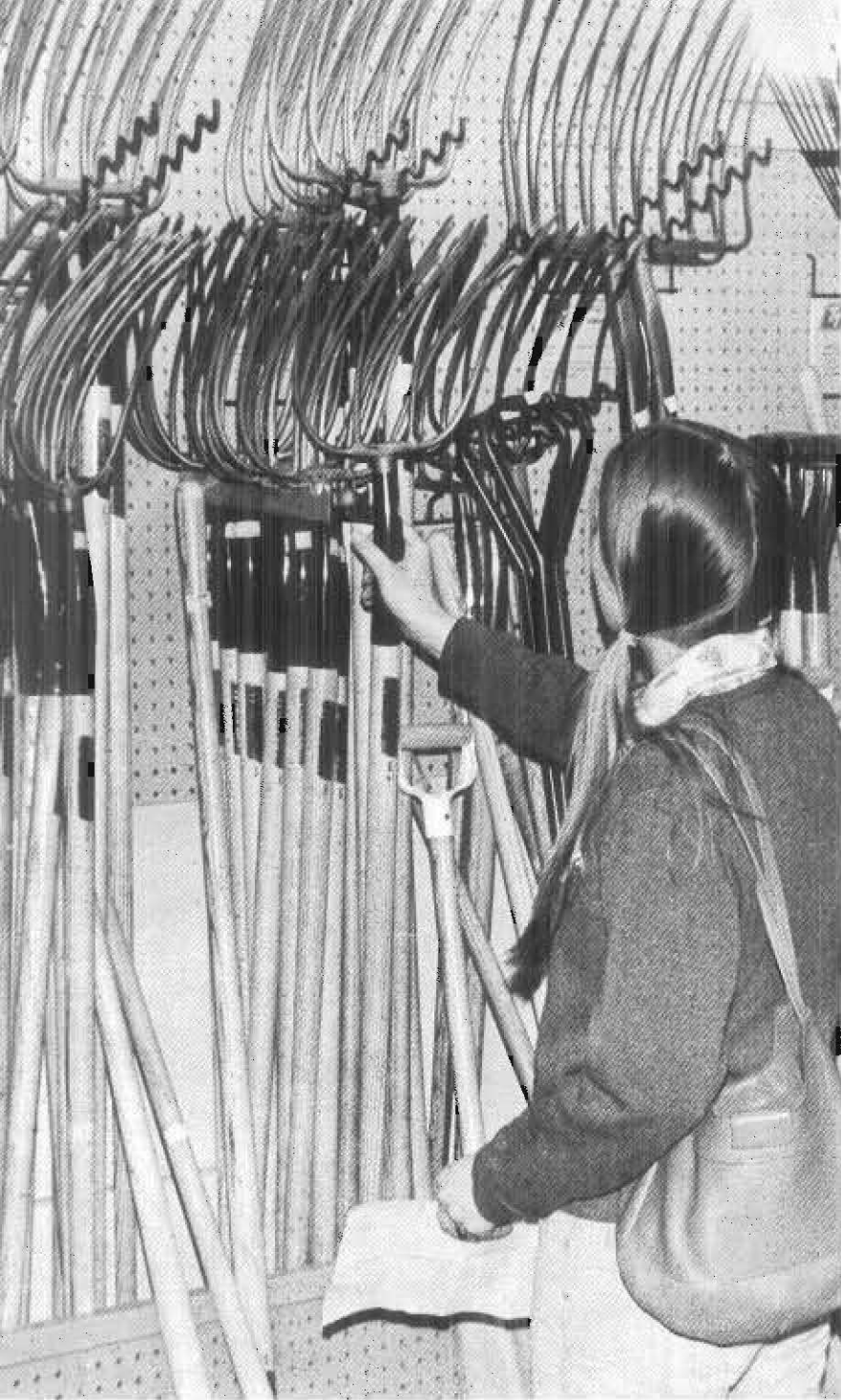
. . . and Business



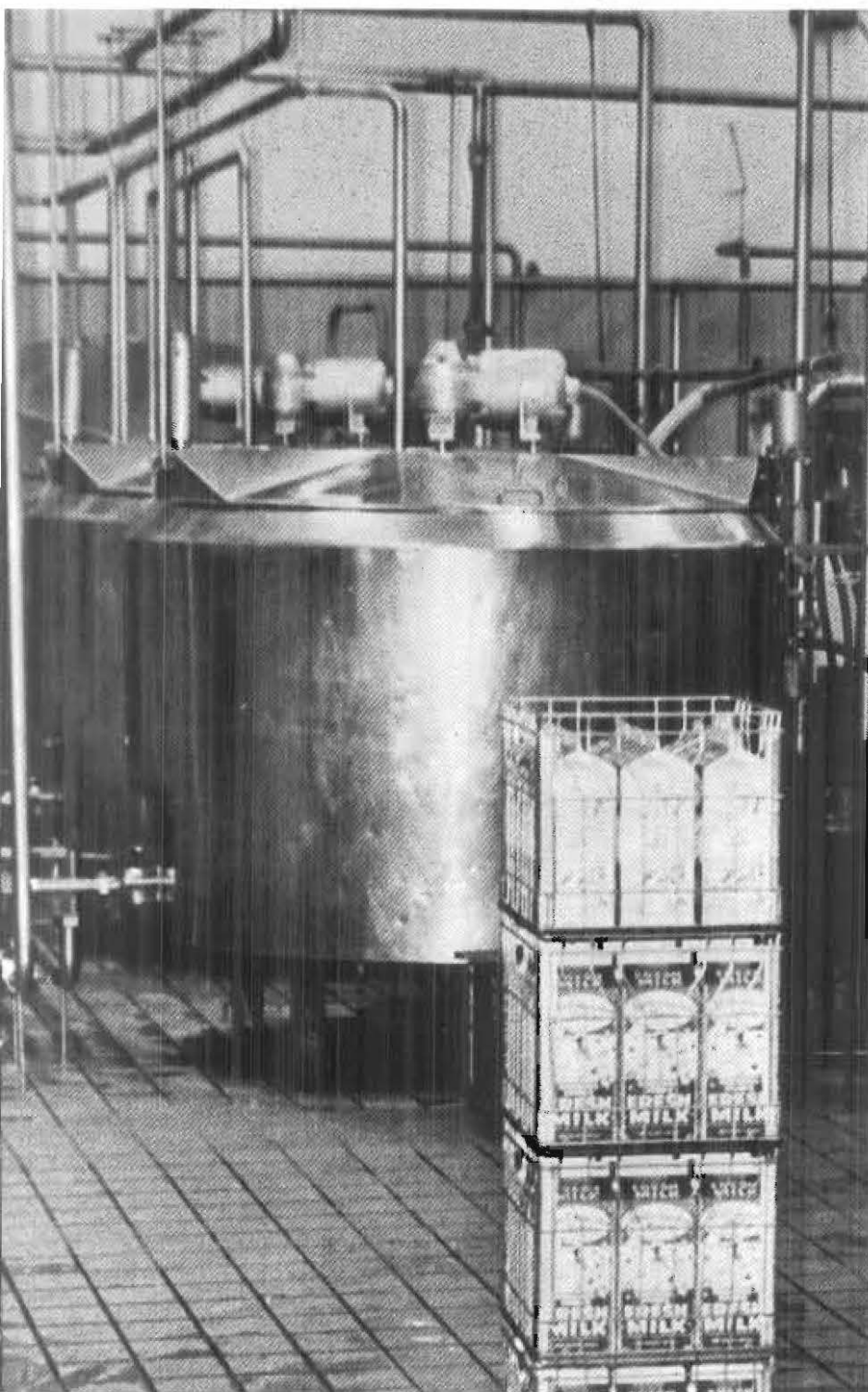
. . . *is Service and Supply*



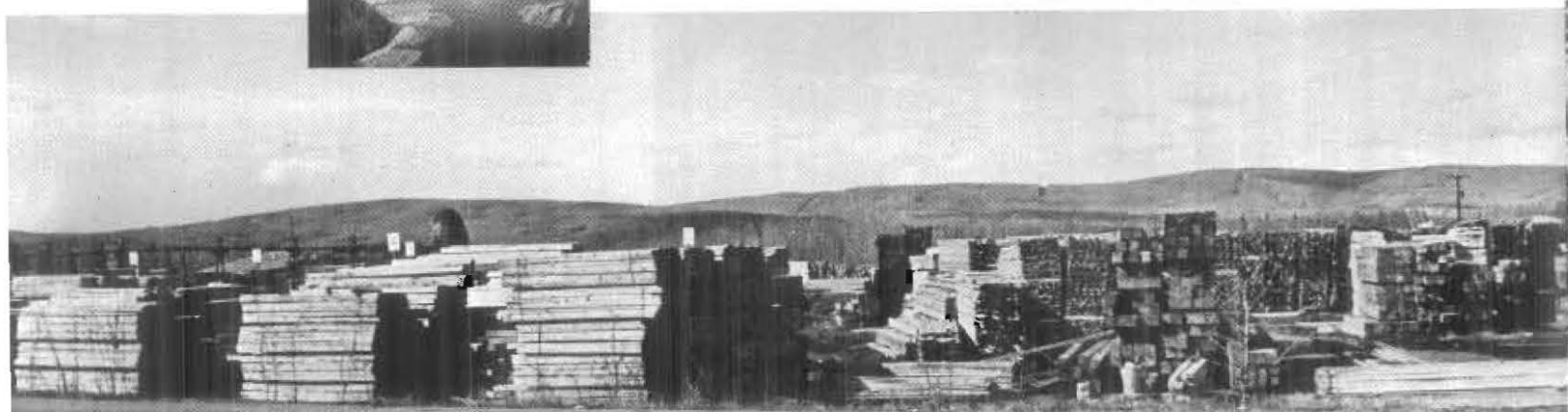
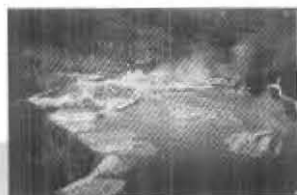




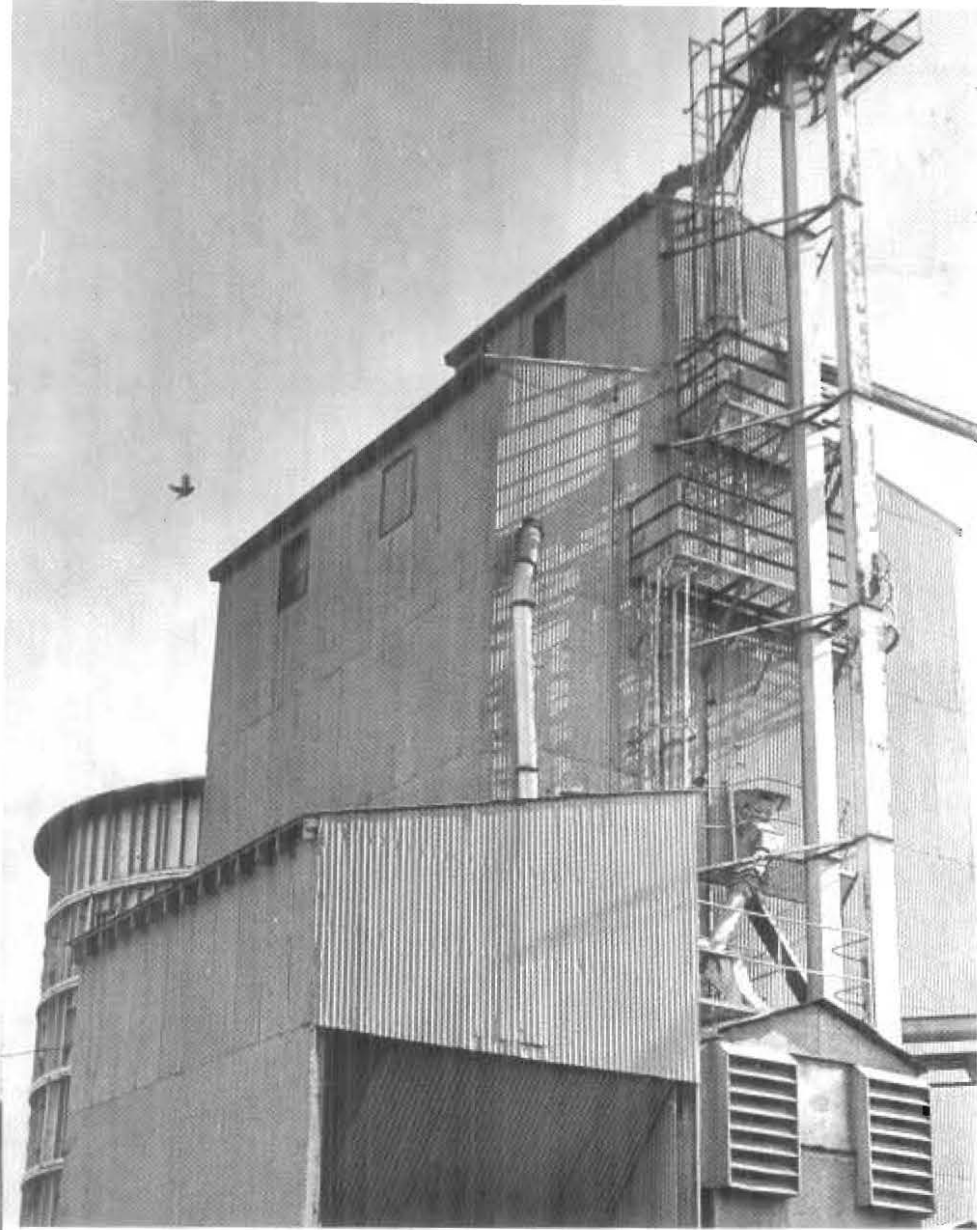
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. . . *processing*



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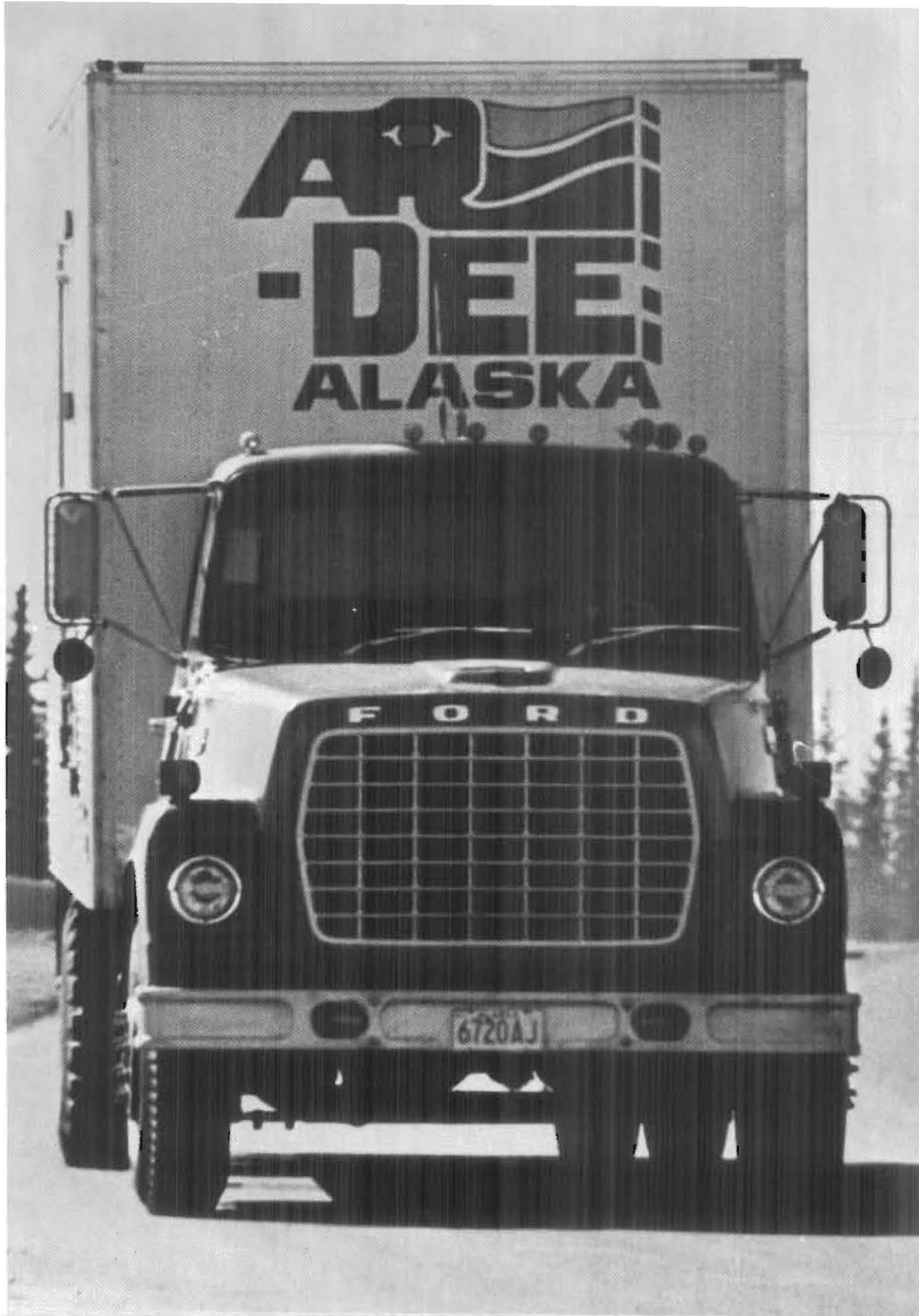




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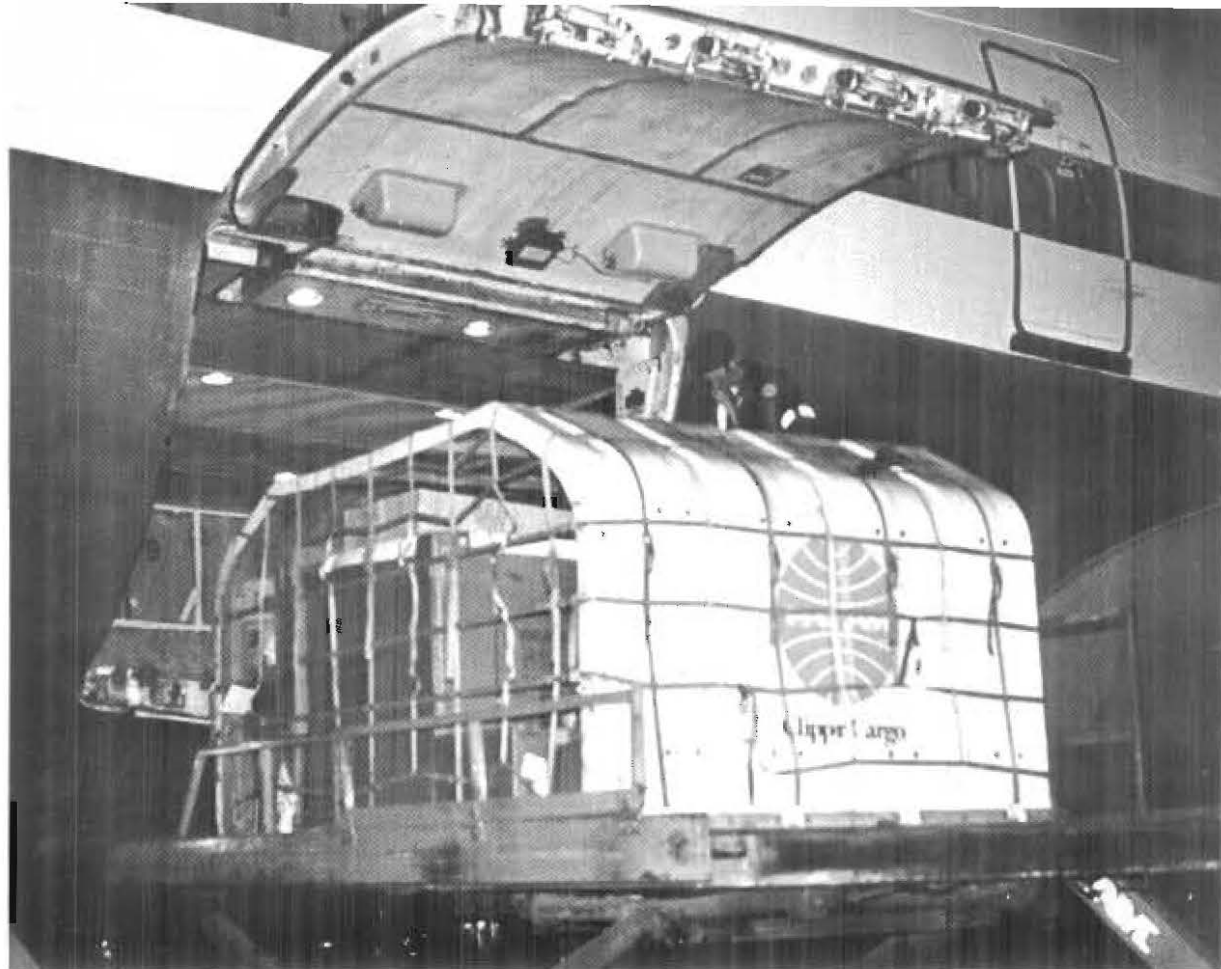


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. . . *transportation*





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We bring it all together
To make your good times
BETTER

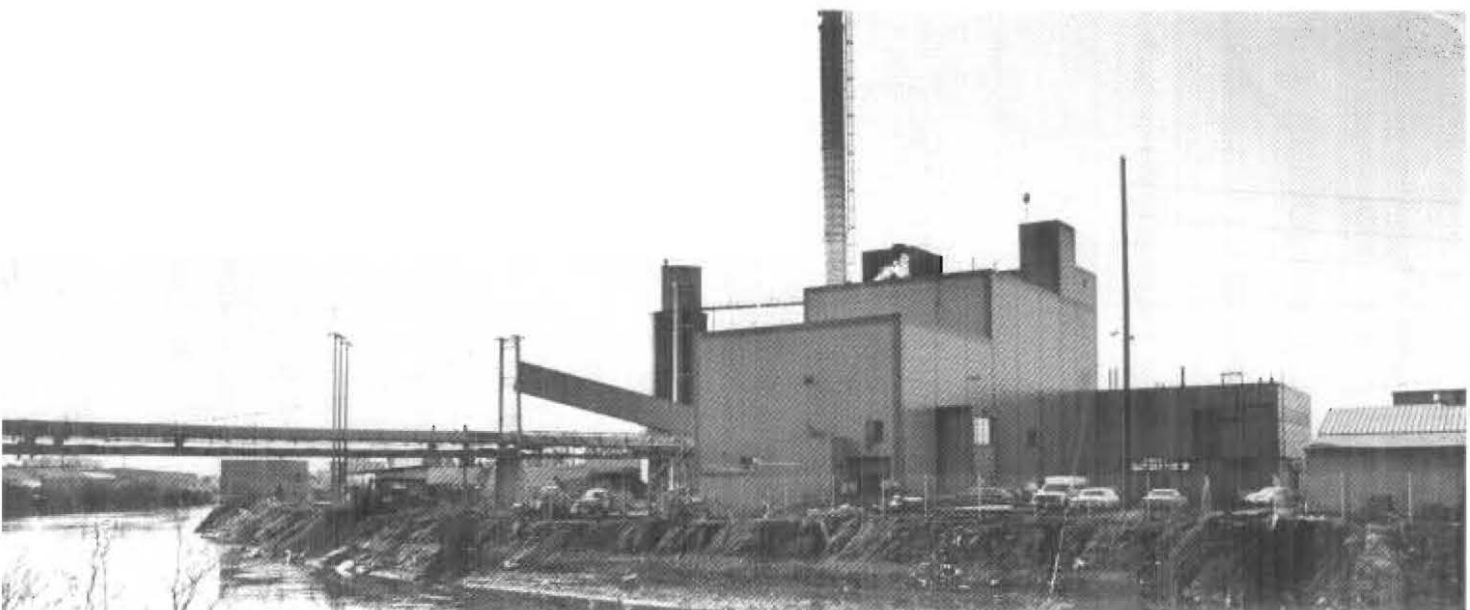
- Chicago Meats
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- Nova Scotia Lox
- Breads from Seattle
- Danish Sweet Butter
- Imported Cheese
- Greek Olives



. . . *marketing*









. . . *is business*

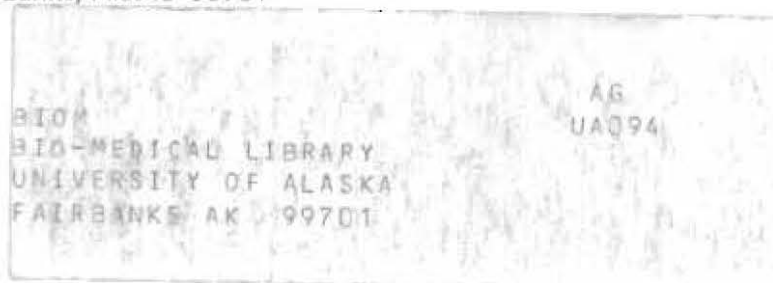
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School of Agriculture and Land Resources Management
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