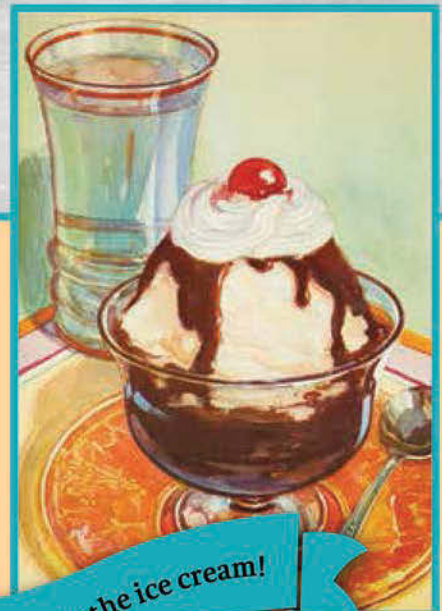


How It Started; How It's Going

Land O'Lakes Celebrates Ten Decades of Innovation

KAREN MELLOTT-FOSHIER, PAGE 1



Don't forget the ice cream!

By the Numbers ...

Does Minnesota “do dairy?” You bet it does! Dairy farmers and related agribusinesses across the state are some of the nation’s leading producers of butter, milk, cheese, and other dairy products. Check out the numbers below:

Fourth in total value of manufactured dairy products:

\$5 billion annually

Sixth in cheese production:

657 million pounds annually

Seventh largest dairy herd:

460,000 dairy cows

Eighth in milk production:

9.5 billion pounds annually

Eighth in dairy product exports:

\$190 million annually

Eighth in employment in dairy product manufacturing:

5,500 people

Number of major dairy product companies and brands:

5*

*Dairy Queen, General Mills, Kraft Heinz, Land O’Lakes, and Schwan’s.

One dairy company (a co-op actually) has been buttering our bread and putting milk (and ice cream!) and other products on our tables for over a century. To learn more about the nation’s No. 1 butter company, see Karen Mellott-Foshier’s article “*How It Started; How It’s Going: Land O’Lakes Celebrates Ten Decades of Innovation*” on page 1.

SOURCES: “Minnesota’s Dairy Industry: A Fact Sheet for Businesses,” Minnesota Employment and Economic Development, 2018, accessed May 24, 2021, https://mn.gov/deed/assets/dairy-fact_tcm1045-315966.pdf.

ON THE COVER



A fleet of ten refrigerated trucks purchased for \$15,000 in 1923 provided early marketing and distribution services to consumers around the Twin Cities. The first drivers, who sold product from their vehicles, eventually opened sales branches in cities across the state. The later model truck pictured here not only advertised butter but other Land O’Lakes products, including dry milk, which became especially popular and essential during the war years. Courtesy of Land O’Lakes, Inc.

Contents

- 1 *How It Started; How It’s Going*
Land O’Lakes Celebrates Ten Decades of Innovation
KAREN MELLOTT-FOSHIER
- 12 *Growing Up Hmong in the Twin Cities*
Gatherings from Before
KAO KALIA YANG
- 17 *The Aesthetics of Bridge Design*
A Paean to Two of St. Paul’s Elegant Park Bridges
CHRISTINE PODAS-LARSON
- 31 **Book Review**

Message from the Editorial Board

For over a year, we’ve been separated from one another—each of us uniquely affected by the global pandemic. But, Summer 2021 has offered a welcome respite from separation and much-needed time to reconnect and heal.

This issue of *Ramsey County History* reminds us of the many ways we connect, and how we are better together than apart—from the Minnesota farmers who pooled their resources, talents, and butter to build an innovative business model; to the traditions kept alive through family gatherings; to the 320 St. Paul bridges that transport us to points north, south, east and west; and to our shared history of conflict and violence—the connections between us are many.

First, Karen Mellott-Foshier brings us a history of Land O’Lakes, Inc., the cooperative that united dairy farmers a century ago, building a more stable market for member-owners and better products for consumers. Kao Kalia Yang shares an intimate account of Hmong traditions cemented through frequent gatherings, many generations, and the shared memories of faraway places that bring and keep families together. And then there are bridges. Whether emotional or physical, bridges offer us a way to meet one another. Christine Podas-Larson has written a loving depiction of St. Paul’s exquisite South Channel and Montreal bridges. Finally, our community is tied to our shared histories, and that often includes conflict. Mary Lethert Wingerd reviews *Massacre In Minnesota* by Gary Clayton Anderson, a refreshed narrative of the 1862 US-Dakota War that offers an unflinching perspective of the damage wrought to all sides by ethnic violence.

This summer, as we finally gather again, we have much to celebrate, mourn, and contemplate as a community.

Anne Field
Chair, Editorial Board

The Ramsey County Historical Society thanks Board Member James A. Stolpestad and affiliate AHS Legacy Fund for supporting the updated design of this magazine. Publication of Ramsey County History is also supported in part by a gift from Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie Jr., and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon. Sincere thanks to Land O’Lakes, Inc., for their financial support.

Land O'Lakes Celebrates Ten Decades of Innovation

KAREN MELLOTT-FOSHIER

Many people are surprised to learn that Land O'Lakes, Inc. is a 100-percent, farmer-owned cooperative, and it has been since its inception in 1921. Known as the butter company worldwide with headquarters today in Arden Hills, Minnesota, Land O'Lakes is celebrating its centennial this year.¹ This is a significant milestone for the Ramsey County-based company, created by soliciting prospective members and convincing them to embrace change and buy into a vision that would disrupt an industry. For these natural-born entrepreneurs with humble beginnings, "That's the way we've always done it" wasn't and isn't part of this farming community's vernacular.

Today, more than 95 percent of dairy farms are family-owned businesses and often work through larger entities such as Land O'Lakes for

processing and packaging. Based on a 2020 report from the National Cooperative Bank (NCB), this Minnesota-based company ranks in the top three of all US cooperatives nationally.²

This celebratory article focuses on the business's early innovations and then pivots to present day. As Land O'Lakes forges ahead under the direction of Beth Ford, its first female president and CEO, the creative cooperative continues to embrace new technologies and ideas to support its member-owners, consumers, and communities around the world.³

What is a Cooperative Creamery?

It all started with a call to collaborate by forming a large cooperative made up of many smaller cooperatives. A cooperative, also known as a cop, forms when a group of people in a particular



Land O'Lakes President and CEO Beth Ford.



Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association Manager Arthur McGuire (First row, fourth from right) with creamery workers, board members, and employees in front of their early warehouse offices at 2386 University Avenue in St. Paul at the corner of Raymond Street, a few blocks east of today's Highway 280. In 1926, the company changed its name to Land O'Lakes, Inc., and moved its headquarters to Northeast Minneapolis. Both images courtesy of Land O'Lakes, Inc.

industry identify unmet needs. The business is developed, owned, and operated by and for the benefit of its members.⁴

Why did many Minnesota farmers choose to join this overarching association? There were a few key needs that they wanted addressed: how to make a better butter; how to standardize business practices; and how to better distribute and market the butter.

So, on June 7, 1921, representatives from 320 of the state's co-op creameries, recognizing they could all do better if they worked together, gathered in the old state capitol building at Tenth and Wabasha Streets in St. Paul and created Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association, which was renamed after their popular sweet cream butter brand—Land O'Lakes—three years later.⁵

Fast forward to 2021, and Land O'Lakes is one of the largest agricultural cooperatives in the world—a \$14 billion organization (\$159 million returned to its 3,000 member-owners) with 9,000 employees working in all fifty states and fifty countries around the world. It is

currently ranked No. 232 on the well-respected Fortune 500 listing, and consumers can find its flagship butter brand in every state in America.⁶ Its four agricultural businesses include Dairy Foods, its mainstay for a century; Purina Animal Nutrition, which develops and distributes best in-class animal feed options; WinField United, a company that offers agricultural retailers technical tools and research-based solutions to help them succeed in the marketplace; and Truterra, which works with farmers to provide agricultural technology and on-farm business management to achieve sustainability for future generations.

While much has changed over one hundred years, the core of who Land O'Lakes is remains the same and drives its success: curiosity, trust, entrepreneurial spirit, community inclusiveness, and a holistic approach that goes beyond its own organization, member-owners, customers, and supply chain. The common thread woven throughout everything they've done since day one is tied to innovation, technology, and sustainability.

The Visionaries of Land O'Lakes

In 1921, Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association's eleven-member committee (including five dairy farmers) made a vision a reality by creating a business plan, bylaws, and articles of incorporation for a statewide cooperative creamery. They built upon the success of the Meeker County Co-op, which was led by future Land O'Lakes President John Brandt, as well as other local cooperative members and organizations represented throughout the state.^a

- John Brandt, Dairy Farmer, Litchfield
- Frank L. Farley, Dairy Farmer, Spring Grove
- Emil G. Johnson, Banker/Secretary Manager of Local Creamery, Round Prairie
- William Harpel, Dairy Farmer, Glencoe
- Hugh J. Hughes, Spokesman with Minnesota Department of Agriculture, St. Paul
- A. J. McGuire, University of Minnesota Extension, Grand Rapids and Minneapolis
- E. O. Melsness, Dairy Farmer, Erskine
- James Rasmussen, Creamery Manager, Albert Lea
- J. P. Sorensen, Dairy Farmer, Askov
- Maurice J. Sorensen, President of Minnesota Creamery Operators and Managers Association, Pelican Rapids
- Tom Stitts, Meeker County Agricultural Agent, Litchfield^b

Making Butter Better

While sweet cream butter is not the company's only major contribution to consumers, it is how Land O'Lakes got its start.⁷ "Sweet cream butter is Land O'Lakes' No. 1 innovation," says Pete Kappelman, a senior vice president of member and government relations at the business.⁸ And he should know. His family's been a part of this company in some capacity for decades. A co-op that his grandfather helped establish eventually merged with Land O'Lakes in the 1980s.

Kappelman, himself, has been a member-owner since 1988, and for twenty-three of those years, he served on the Board of Directors—fifteen as board chair. Two years ago, Kappelman joined the Land O'Lakes leadership team in his current role. He advocates for farmers and provides guidance to position them for long-term success.⁹ Sound familiar? That's because it's what the organization has been doing since the early days. And it all began with butter.

"The fact that they called it sweet cream butter infers that what they had before didn't taste as good," Kappelman says.¹⁰ There was no refrigeration to cool the cream to make butter rapidly after separating (which is necessary to



A horse carriage transports tubs of butter to the railroad depot in Milaca, Minnesota. Before the creation of the Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association, individual and county co-ops paid high shipping rates for partial carloads.

keep it from souring). Cream was skimmed by hand, barns and milk pails could be unsanitary, and there were few uniform testing standards. That often resulted in poor-quality butter and low prices because cream was purchased by volume regardless of the quality.¹¹

Butter as we know it today has evolved considerably. While it was used as a cooking fat, not many folks were slathering it liberally on their toast. Fortunately, somebody decided enough with the nasty-tasting butter. With the commitment to quality, Land O'Lakes butter eventually featured premium sweet cream, and there was scientific technology behind that commitment. The revolutionary Babcock Test developed by Stephen M. Babcock at the turn of the twentieth century provided a simple way to measure the amount of butterfat in milk and cream and helped the dairy industry reliably evaluate quality.¹²

But even with this test, farmers or members of smaller cooperatives were at the mercy of markets and had little to no control over pricing. The creation of the Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association was meant to give members greater authority locally and on a national level.

Improving Industry Standards

Grassroots research by founding members of Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association, including John Brandt, who led the successful Meeker County Cooperative Creamery and eventually became president of Land O'Lakes, and his friend Tom Stitts, an agricultural agent, uncovered inconsistencies and unscrupulous behavior in the business. This sleuthing eventually won over any initial resistance to joining the statewide cooperative mission.¹³



John Brandt served as president of Land O'Lakes for nearly thirty years. Both images courtesy of Land O'Lakes, Inc.

For example, Brandt witnessed two cooperatives place their own butter tubs aboard the same railroad freight car heading to the same East Coast destination, but because they were from separate co-ops, the farmers had to pay the more expensive less-than-carload freight rates. Later, Brandt discovered that those two creameries received payments from the same commission house, yet shoddy (or maybe even intentional) bookkeeping practices recorded the butter tubs arriving on different days. With more investigation, the cooperative front men determined that dairy producers could save more than \$100 (~\$1,500 when adjusted for inflation today) on a single carload if they pooled their resources and shipped as a full carload.¹⁴

And that's not all members discovered in regard to abusive business practices. Commission

men in charge of Eastern markets determined the butter prices throughout the United States during daily public auctions and would dump excessive butter onto the market during heavy spring production months, which lowered the price. They would then buy up inventory at the lower price and sell later at a profit.¹⁵

Additionally, these commission houses received a fixed rate, so ensuring fair and reasonable pricing for dairy farmers didn't concern them. The co-op founders discovered that even good butter would not receive premium pricing because the buyers used disparate grading systems. Because Minnesota farmers and creameries had no scales of their own, they had to accept decisions when commission houses claimed butter shipments were short. Future leaders of the association estimated that Minnesota creameries were missing out on \$10 million a year as a result of these unethical business practices (~\$134 million).¹⁶ Association members were, indeed, pleased when the co-op began to work out a standardized industry system. This included member-owners in Warren, Minnesota, as reported by the local paper:

At least 50 carloads of Minnesota Cooperative creamery butter are moving to the eastern market this week under the consolidation of shipping plans of the state association . . . [which] plans to establish its own traffic department so that patrons . . . see that freight charges are just, the shipments are properly inspected, and that the farmers' interests are protected in all matters of losses and overcharges.¹⁷

Creating a National Distribution and Marketing System

In the early 1920s, Minnesota Cooperative Creameries also needed a better way to distribute and sell their dairy products. "The idea was to take sweet cream butter from Minnesota and distribute to all parts of the country," says Land O'Lakes' Chief Technology Officer Teddy Bekele. "So how do you enable it?"¹⁸ It's 1921. No Internet, no email, no TV. Even telephones and radio were in their early adoption phase. And while

rural free delivery (RFD) was becoming more prominent, the US Postal Service routes didn't deliver everywhere in Minnesota or elsewhere.¹⁹

Bekele says a crucial Land O'Lakes innovation from a technological standpoint was the creation of its national distribution system using scientific knowledge to develop an integrated network with all key stakeholders, especially retailers. The fledgling co-op's ability to establish a national network to market its own products with limited resources and no blueprint had never been done before.²⁰

To start, it was important to educate and recruit more members in Minnesota. S. G. Gustafson, a butter expert and former state dairy and food inspector, was an early influencer, helping convince dairy farmers to join the cooperative movement. He and Brandt traveled to creamery after creamery, sharing how a unified front among Minnesota dairy farmers would benefit them all. Simply put, bypassing the commission houses meant lower costs for consumers and better returns for farmers.²¹

Expanding the market to sell their "fancy butter" to all corners of the country was a challenge and opportunity. The majority of Americans at the time were not aware a better-tasting butter even existed. Through a series of letters to member-owners and prospective members, co-op leadership shared examples of the need to distribute their better butter across the country. One letter used New York as an example: "New York consumes a large quantity of fine butter, but there are still thousands and thousands of people who do not know good butter and who have to be educated before this market will take a much larger quantity of butter than it is now asked to absorb."²² So that was a new frontier the early cooperative farmers explored—not only selling their premier sweet cream butter themselves in existing markets but expanding and educating consumers in other regions.²³

Slowly, farmers began accepting the challenge of marketing their own products. Further helping advance that vision was the passage of the Capper-Volstead Act in 1922, cosponsored by Minnesota Congressman Andrew Volstead. This bill eliminated antitrust laws for farmers and served as a catalyst for Minnesota Cooperative Creameries to create and expand its sales, marketing, and distribution strategies.²⁴



Land O'Lakes' Chief Technology Officer Teddy Bekele. *Courtesy of Land O'Lakes, Inc.*

Devising a National Sales Strategy and Business Plan

At the association's second annual meeting in March 1923, Brandt moved from secretary to president, a position he would hold for nearly thirty years. His first priority—establishing the cooperative's own butter sales agency. The strategy included creating sales offices in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, where they could inspect all butter upon arrival, check the grading process by customers, and find ways to increase consumer demand.²⁵

They also invested heavily in additional marketing tactics such as a \$1,500 (~\$22,000) advertising campaign at the National Dairy Show in St. Paul, ads in New York and Chicago publications, and the purchase of ten branded trucks. They also produced a company documentary and manufactured children's toys such as Land O'Lakes sailboats.²⁶

To meet anticipated demand, the cooperative invested \$14,000 (~\$211,000) to improve its operations at the Central Warehouse in St. Paul. They even added a print room where they could brand their one-pound butter cartons.²⁷

In just a few short years, higher-quality dairy products, wider distribution efforts, and smart marketing paid off. In 1924, the state reported that the value of creamery butter skyrocketed to \$90,000,000 from \$72,000,000 in 1922. And it was a very good day for co-op members when the United States Navy sent a check for \$32,000 for 450,000 pounds of butter. A week's output from every member-owner in the association was needed to fulfill just one butter order, garnering a hefty sum, nearly \$500,000 today.²⁸

Branding the Better Butter

Branding was also an important strategy. To create more publicity, interest, and sales around its premier butter, the association determined they needed a better butter name, as Minnesota Cooperative Creamery Butter did not roll off the tongue. So, in 1924, the association took out full-page ads in newspapers and farm publications. With the campaign focusing on the golden color of its sweet cream butter, the association offered \$500 in gold as prizes (~\$7,500).²⁹

This contest brought in 7,000 entries a day. After weeks of evaluating all options, the company selected the winning entry from two



This flyer, which touts the benefits of cooperative marketing, was designed to convince dairy farmers and cooperatives that it pays to be part of this larger association.



Minnesota's butter-naming contest brought in nearly 100,000 entries. Ida Foss of Hopkins, Minnesota, and George Swift of Minneapolis separately submitted the winning name—Land O'Lakes. Each won \$200 in gold. An additional \$300 was awarded to the runners-up, who suggested the names Maid O' the West and Tommy Tucker. *Both images courtesy of Land O'Lakes, Inc.*

Early packaging for Land O'Lakes butter (and other products) included an illustration of an "Indian maiden" looking out over a Minnesota landscape. In 2020, the company eliminated the image (which had been revised multiple times over the years) to focus attention on two key attributes consumers had been missing: The fact that Land O'Lakes is farmer-owned and the organization's cooperative status. Courtesy of Land O'Lakes, Inc.



Minnesotans, and that is how the name Land O'Lakes—for both the butter and, later, the company—was born.³⁰

More Than a Butter Company: A Brief Snapshot of the Middle Decades

As Land O'Lakes grew, it continued to develop new dairy and agricultural products, but there was no time to rest on its laurels. Members realized that good products can only come from good sources—animals that receive the best care and nutrition—so, just prior to the Great Depression, the company jumped into the feed business. Then it was on to other ventures. In 1934, the cooperative started producing cheese with partnerships in Wisconsin and other states, and by the 1940s, the company was storing its brand of Cavquird cheese in St. Paul's bluff caves on West Channel Street.³¹

As it became evident that the United States was headed for war, Land O'Lakes stepped up to help, doubling production and supplying over 100 million pounds of butter, cheese, dried eggs, poultry, and, perhaps, most importantly dry or powdered milk, using an innovative production process invented just years earlier. The milk was vital to the soldiers overseas but also to the producers, as it provided extra income, in part, because of whole milk and butter rations. Dry milk production volumes skyrocketed from 22 million pounds in 1941 to 119 million pounds in 1945.³²

After the war, the company revolutionized the feed industry by inventing a calf-milk replacer made from milk solids, lard, and vitamins and minerals. Once newborn calves received the necessary colostrum from mother's milk, they could be switched to a milk-replacer (instead of marketable whole milk). This new product enhanced weight gains and reduced feeding costs for dairy farmers.³³

In 1956, the co-op bought the Minnesota-based ice cream company Bridgeman's and expanded its role in providing one of America's favorite desserts, which eventually could be delivered straight to a family's door by a Land O'Lakes milkman.³⁴

During these years, the cooperative held steady, continuing to add food and feed products, focusing on animal nutrition, and always evaluating what worked, what didn't work (for a short while, they dabbled in paint products), and what could be improved. The biggest challenges encountered by farmers in the early days are the same they face today—what will the weather do? And how will it affect the planting, growing, and harvest seasons, and, ultimately, the markets?³⁵

In the early 1980s, the company turned its focus on other countries. How could they work with farmers around the world to meet their needs as businesspeople, help them provide quality agricultural products, and enhance food security and economic prosperity? The answer—the independent, nonprofit that's now called Land O'Lakes Venture³⁷. Fast-forward to today and through crop, livestock, and dairy ventures, the business assisted 1,400,000+ people, created 2,500 jobs, and supported 650+ businesses in 2020 alone.³⁶

Sustainable Innovation: A Conversation with a Member-Owner

It is thought butter was developed thousands of years ago, possibly by nomadic people. Some versions of the Bible describe the prophet Abraham as serving it at a feast. Early on, it may have been “churned” in animal skins.^a

Clearly, agricultural processes have changed a lot since then, and today, producers don’t just think about making a product for personal or commercial use. It’s a lot more complicated than that. For farmer Ross Greden, sustainability is one of his biggest priorities, and it’s not because all the cool kids are doing it now. Sustainable agriculture, which is centered around promoting a “healthy environment, economic profitability, and social and economic equity,”^b is in his DNA.

In the 1980s, his grandfather, a member of the local Soil and Water Conservation District, encouraged Greden to enter a conservation poster contest. That early interest grew when the family learned their farm was home to a prairie remnant, with true native grasslands that existed before European settlements. The discovery led to purposeful reforestation with 100,000 trees planted on their farm, prairie restoration projects, prescribed burnings, soil conservation practices, wildlife management, and more.^c

So, what does this all have to do with producing quality butter? Greden, a Land O’Lakes member-owner since 1995, works 1,000 acres of farmland in Altura, Minnesota, southeast of Ramsey County and west of Winona. There, 550 dairy cows are milked three times a day on land that’s been in his family since 1866. According to Greden, there’s a symbiotic relationship between the animals, the soil, and people. (This was likely true thousands of years ago, too.)

“The plants grow. Crops are harvested and fed to the animals. Animals produce milk. The milk [and milk products such as butter or ice cream] provide nutrients to Land O’Lakes customers, to me, and to my family. And then the extra nutrients that the cow produces go right back into the soil for more fertility.”^d Farmers are not just thinking about the bottom line or profits, he adds. “We’re always thinking of five generations from now. . . .”^e

Technology Then and Now

Technology innovation in agribusiness progressed considerably with revolutionary advances that the founding members of the cooperative could never have envisioned. For example, in 1921, it was common for horses to work the fields. Eventually, mechanical tractors, plows, and combines became mainstream, continually growing in size so larger swaths of land could be farmed faster.

“You only have a small window to farm, especially in the Midwest,” Bekele says. “Therefore, getting crops planted in a short period and harvesting at the right time were [and continue to be] all important.”³⁷

In 2021, tractors pretty much drive themselves. “What [farmers] do today is give a prescription or file to the tractor. And then the tractor plants the seeds in the ground, moving back and forth using GPS,” says Bekele. “It makes all the turns, plants more seeds in one



spot and less seeds in another according to this prescription.”³⁸ Essentially these tractors are robots moving up and down the field per their prescribed programming.

Today, America has far fewer farmers, but these women and men are producing more food than ever. Bekele credits that to technological innovation and the fact that farmers not only embrace change, but they also create it. “If you ever

This John Deere 9600 series combine from the 1990s was a state-of-the-art machine at the time. Thirty years on, technological advances continue to assist farmers in their daily work in new and surprising ways. *Courtesy of Land O’Lakes, Inc.*

Minnesota Farming Stats—Yesterday and Today

	1920	2020
Number of farms	178,478	67,500
Average farm size	169 acres	376 acres
Total farm acres	30.2 million	25.4 million

In USDA Minnesota Ag News: Farms and Land in Farms, February 19, 2021.

see a farmer's operation, there's always something novel that they're trying," Bekele says.³⁹ And Land O'Lakes is right there with them.

For example, in 2019—in partnership with Uber Freight—the company completed the nation's first cross-country commercial shipment using a self-driving truck. The autonomous vehicle drove itself (along with a safety driver) from Tulare, California, to Quakertown, Pennsylvania, over a three-day period carrying 40,000 pounds of butter. Digital and automated suppliers like these help improve the customer experience.⁴⁰

Technology allows farmers to outfit a dairy barn with facial recognition cameras to gather health intel, such as body size and shape, on every cow, and collar sensors monitor their vitals so producers know when the animals are going into labor. The company's Purina Animal Nutrition business also piloted a door lock that opens a horse barn door in the event of a fire. That way animals can escape safely, which protects owners who might have attempted to rescue them.⁴¹

"I think it's imperative for us to not just think of technology as an enabler but as a driver for new competitive advantages . . . in the future," Bekele says.⁴²

One of the more recent and crucial innovations for Land O'Lakes, and the one that excites Bekele the most, is its research and development (R&D) into data insights, which provide a way to analyze data and information to make better business decisions.⁴³

An example comes with the data gathered at the Purina Animal Nutrition Center in Missouri. The business creates different feed formulations for pigs, chicken, and beef and dairy cattle. From the tags cows wear, the research team collects data that provide everything from the weight of the cow to the components in the milk. This helps determine what's working and what isn't to continue to improve animal nutrition, health, and performance.⁴⁴

Another fascinating example of technological innovation comes from data gathered through WinField United Answer Plots. In these test plots, "we plant different seed varieties [and] apply different crop-protection applications in different environments [and] different soil conditions using different practices," Bekele says. "[If] you're a farmer and you want to try these seeds, wouldn't it be great to know there's someone who's [tested them] in literally every possible condition and replicated [the test] 115 different times?"⁴⁵

Of course, there's always more to do. Creating a distribution network one hundred years ago was one of Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association's first innovations. They made better butter, but they had to find a way to reach and educate farmers, co-ops, and consumers. New and better products didn't add any value if people didn't know about them. This is not dissimilar to the challenge of reaching and educating rural communities today by creating a

Always striving for excellence, Land O'Lakes uses research and development test plots to improve products and services for the agricultural community.



Land O'Lakes' American Connection Project connects rural communities with broadband Internet access. Both images courtesy of Land O'Lakes, Inc.



About 2,000 employees work out of the Land O'Lakes headquarters in Arden Hills, Minnesota. The company opened its newest building on campus (Building C) in the spring of 2018. *Courtesy of Land O'Lakes, Inc.*

new kind of network. According to Bekele, “If the connectivity is not there, none of this is possible.”⁴⁶

That’s why the cooperative’s American Connection Project is so important. Over the last few years, Land O’Lakes has partnered with other agricultural organizations, including state Farm Bureaus, to ensure that rural communities can access broadband Internet services through 3,000 Wi-Fi locations because member-owners and their families and neighbors can’t be productive if they aren’t connected.⁴⁷

Many consumers may not know that less than 2 percent of all US workers provide the

majority of the food we eat. We rely heavily on a very small agriculture industry. That means rural infrastructure must work. Imagine if roads are bad and farmers can’t get food to market, or a farm worker is injured on the job and no one can get through to call 911, or a family member is unable to drive eighty miles to see a doctor. What happens when students can’t get online to take their classes during COVID and, therefore, can’t graduate? These are issues that ultimately affect us all. Land O’Lakes and its cooperative membership are aware of these issues and is constantly adapting to change and figuring out how to solve problems such as these.⁴⁸

Land O’ Lakes: Committed to Ramsey County Communities

As a farmer-owned cooperative, Land O’Lakes has always believed in working together for common good. Whether in its international endeavors or here at home, the company bases its philanthropy on three pillars: education, hunger relief, and strengthening communities. For decades, Land O’Lakes has invested in partnerships with local organizations to help residents of Ramsey County and the surrounding areas. Some of these collaborations include the American Red Cross, Second Harvest Heartland, and Greater Twin Cities United Way. They also have joined community-wide efforts on large capital projects, such as helping build the new Catholic Charities Dorothy Day Place in downtown St. Paul. In addition, the cooperative supports numerous nonprofit organizations, including the Shoreview YMCA, Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES), the Center for Economic Inclusion, University of Minnesota’s Saint Paul campus, and The Good Acre.^a

What Does the Future Hold?

What will sustain Land O'Lakes into the future? "We're celebrating one hundred years; it's fantastic," says Kappelman. "Now, how are we going to win in year 101?"⁴⁹

For member-owners, trust and embracing change—just like in the very beginning—are key to shared success for future generations, according to both Bekele and Kappelman. For consumers, the cooperative will continue to build that trust by producing high-quality products, including its trademark better butter, and providing exceptional service, solid marketing and branding, and increased market share.

"Establishing ourselves as trusted partners was the principle that co-ops were founded on," Kappelman says.⁵⁰ And it's important to remember that John Brandt's early insight was not limited to near-term, local success. He could see

where the butter industry and farmers should go all across the United States. He just had to bring everyone along on the thought process and gain their trust so they, too, could see his vision. With that, Land O'Lakes was born.

Karen Mellott-Foshier is a Twin Cities-based freelance contract marketing communications and content storyteller. With over twenty-five years of corporate communications experience with global companies, she is also the owner and author of kmfiswriting.com, a travel and lifestyle blog website. Mellott-Foshier focuses on Minnesota destinations and history as well as US and international travel. She recently finished hiking all sixty-six Minnesota state parks and is currently writing a local's guidebook about her experience, which will be published later in 2021.

NOTES

1. With its beginning as Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association in St. Paul in 1921, the fast-growing organization moved to Minneapolis in 1926, where it remained for fifty-five years. Land O'Lakes relocated back to Ramsey County in 1981, setting up headquarters in Arden Hills. The company chose the location based on parcel size, cost, proximity to the interstate, and room to grow.

2. "America's Top Co-Op Companies," report, National Cooperative Bank, 2020, accessed July 7, 2021, <https://impact.ncb.coop/hubfs/assets/resources/NCB-Co-op-100-2020-final.pdf>.

3. Beth Ford joined Land O'Lakes in 2011 and stepped into her current role in 2018. Named one of *Fortune* magazine's "World's Greatest Leaders and Most Powerful Women," she focuses on "connecting people, particularly in urban areas, with the farmers and rural communities who grow their food." She and Land O'Lakes were featured on *Sixty Minutes* news magazine in the fall of 2019.

4. Ivy Wigmore, "Cooperative (co-op)," Tech Target Network, accessed June 4, 2021, <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/cooperative-co-op>; "What is a cooperative?" Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of California, accessed June 30, 2021, http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/cooperatives/what_is/; Jack El-Hai, *Celebrating Tradition, Building the Future: Seventy-Five Years of Land O'Lakes* (Minneapolis: Land O'Lakes, 1996), 8, 16. In the late 1800s, Theophilus Levi Haecker with the University of Minnesota was one of the first in the state to encourage dairy farmers to join co-op creameries.

5. El-Hai, 10, 18; "Cooperation Is Big Help in the Making of Butter," *Grand Forks Herald*, August 25, 1921, 5.

6. Brooke Dillon, "Land O'Lakes, Inc. delivers strong

results for first quarter 2021," Land O'Lakes Q1 Earnings Release, 2021, accessed June 4, 2021, <https://www.landolakesinc.com/Press/News/2021-Q1-Earnings-Release>; "By the Numbers," Annual Report, Land O'Lakes, Inc., 2020, accessed July 20, 2021. In its 2020 annual report, the company reported that it works with 748 agricultural producers, 956 retail owners, and 1,638 dairy producers.

7. "Land O'Lakes Founded in 1921 Now Leading All," *The Brainerd Daily Dispatch*, June 11, 1929, 6.

8. Pete Kappelman, Tim Brunelle, and Brooke Dillon with Land O'Lakes, Inc., video conference with author, March 4, 2021.

9. Kappelman, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 4, 2021.

10. Kappelman, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 4, 2021.

11. Kenneth Douglas Ruble, *Men to Remember: How 100,000 Neighbors Made History* (Chicago: Lakeside Press/R. R. Donnelly & Sons Company, 1947), 7, 65.

12. Merrill E. Jarchow, "The Beginnings of Minnesota Dairying," *Minnesota History* 27, no. 2 (June 1946), 118; "What We Do: Our Businesses," Land O'Lakes website, accessed June 4, 2021, <https://www.landolakesinc.com/What-We-Do>; "Babcock's Revolutionary Dairy Invention," Wisconsin Historical Society, accessed June 30, 2021, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS2687>.

13. "Brandt Again Heads Co-op," *The Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 10, 1934, 3; Axel Hansen, "State Farm Co-ops Take Top U.S. Spot," *The Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 28, 1949, 94.

14. Ruble, 37.

15. Ruble, 114.

16. Ruble, 29, 36, 52.

17. Farm Bureau News Service, "Harpel Heads Creamery Men," *Warren Sheaf*, June 22, 1922, 2.
18. Teddy Bekele, Tim Brunelle, and Brooke Dillon with Land O'Lakes, Inc., interview with author, March 5, 2021.
19. Ruble, 6, 8.
20. Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021; Ruble, 158.
21. Ruble, 37.
22. Ruble, 124.
23. "What Creative Marketing Is Doing for Minnesota," flyer, Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association, Inc., n.d., in Land O'Lakes Archives.
24. "Jardin Cites Farming Gains Made in Year," *The Minneapolis Star Tribune*, December 10, 1926, 1, 16-17. While not everyone favored the Capper-Volstead Act, it was meant to help cooperatives organize and better market their goods "without the threat of prosecution under federal anti-trust laws," Ruble, 96.
25. Ruble, 98-99, 113-115, 118.
26. A. J. McGuire, letter to Secretary, Henning Co-Op Creamery, October 4, 1921, in Land O'Lakes Archives; Ruble, 91, 98, 101-102; El-Hai, 36.
27. Ruble, 130-131.
28. "Minnesota's Largest Butter Check," *The Minneapolis Tribune*, July 18, 1924, 13.
29. "It's Time to Brand Minnesota Butter," advertisement, Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association, Inc., 1924, in Land O'Lakes Archives.
30. "Land O'Lakes: The Name Selected for Minnesota's Finest Butter," advertisement, Minnesota Cooperative Creameries Association, Inc., in Land O'Lakes Archives.
31. "Land O'Lakes Cavquard aged 2 years cheddar cheese," advertisement, in *Chicago Tribune*, September 2, 1954, 57; Greg A. Brick, "The University Farm Experimental Cave and How St. Paul Became the Blue Cheese Capital of the World," *Ramsey County History* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2001), 7-8.
32. "A Year of Progress By and For the Farmers of the Northwest," *Marshfield News Herald*, May 14, 1945, 9; El-Hai, 65; "A Year of Progress," 9.
33. "Stop/Start: Land O'Lakes Milk Replacer," advertisement, in *Manitowoc Herald-Times*, September 25, 1965, 10.
34. "Land O'Lakes Purchases Bridgeman's," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, March 4, 1952, 13; "Land O'Lakes Milk and Ice Cream," advertisement, in *The Winona Daily News*, April 14, 1960, 23.
35. El-Hai, 60-61; Tim Brunelle, interview with editor, July 2, 2021.
36. "Land O'Lakes Venture37," accessed July 7, 2021, <https://www.landolakesventure37.org/>.
37. Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021.
38. Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021.
39. Ali Lucia, "Minnesotan to Meet: Teddy Bekele returns to his farming roots," *WCCO*, August 1, 2017, accessed June 4, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3D5TbFzmGO8>; Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021.
40. Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021;

"Yes, we sent 20 tons of butter cross-country (mostly) without a driver," editorial, Land O'Lakes, Inc., accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.landolakesinc.com/Press/News/a-high-tech-butter-delivery>.

41. Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021.

42. Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021.

43. It is important to note that data and data insights are different. Data include simple information/results, whereas data insights are the actual analysis of that data, and that's where the value lies.

44. "Dairy feed research from the ground up and the people who make it happen," Member Newsletter, July 2019, accessed June 4, 2021, <https://www.landolakesinc.com/Members/Member-News/July-2019/dairy-feed-research-from-the-ground-up>.

45. Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021; Brunelle, July 2, 2021.

46. Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021.

47. Annual Report, 2020.

48. Bekele, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 5, 2021.

49. Kappelman, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 4, 2021.

50. Kappelman, Brunelle, and Dillon, March 4, 2021.

Notes to Sidebar on p. 2

a. For decades in many small towns across the State of Minnesota, local creameries were, in a Norman Rockwellian sort of way, the "community center," where locals gathered daily to make purchases and share news.

b. Kenneth Douglas Ruble, *Men to Remember: How 100,000 Neighbors Made History* (Chicago: Lakeside Press/R.R. Donnelly & Sons Company, 1947), 55-57.

Notes to Sidebar on p. 7

a. "A miniature pictorial history of butter," Land O'Lakes promotional poster, n.d., in Land O'Lakes Archives; Tracy Mumford, "Butter's Rich History: 5 Things You May Not Know," *MPR News*, November 22, 2016, accessed June 4, 2021, <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/11/22/books-things-about-butter>.

b. "What is Sustainable Agriculture?" University of California Davis Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program, accessed July 6, 2021, <https://sarep.ucdavis.edu/sustainable-ag>. Farmers who practice sustainable agriculture consciously choose to produce value-based foods that are environmentally friendly, using specific water and soil conservation methods and working to reduce related pollution levels. Farming efforts also may center around the wellbeing of farm workers.

c. Ross Greden, phone interview with author, April 1, 2021.

d. Greden, April 1, 2021.

e. Greden, April 1, 2021.

Notes to Sidebar on p. 9

a. Brooke Dillon with Land O'Lakes, Inc., email correspondence with author, March 29, 2021.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

President

Chad P. Roberts

Editor

Meredith Cummings

Editor Emeritus (2006-2018)

John Lindley

Founding Editor (1964-2006)

Virginia Brainard Kunz

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Board of Directors

Jerry Woelfel

Chair

Mari Oyanagi Eggum

First Vice Chair

Robert W. Mairs

Second Vice Chair

Elizabeth J. Keyes

Secretary

Peter Nguyen

Treasurer

Jo Anne Driscoll, Jo Emerson, Anne Field,
Tim Glines, Lorraine Griffin Johnson,
John Guthmann, John Hamburger, Judy Kishel,
Debbie Lee, Joe Lutz, Marc J Manderscheid,
James Miller, Jonathan H. Morgan, Chad P. Roberts,
Roxanne Sands, George T. Stephenson,
James A. Stolpestad, Joe Twomey, July Vang,
Glenn Wiessner, Lee Pao Xiong

Directors Emeriti

W. Andrew Boss, George A. Mairs,
Richard T. Murphy Sr., Paul A. Verret

Editorial Board

Anne Field, *Chair*, Thomas H. Boyd,
Anne Cowie, John Diers, John Guthmann,
Lisa L. Heinrich, Kyle Imdieke, James Miller,
John Milton, Laurie M. Murphy, Paul D. Nelson,
Richard H. Nicholson, Jay Pfander, David Riehle,
Chad P. Roberts, George T. Stephenson, Mark Taylor,
Steve Trimble, Mary Lethert Wingerd,
Matthew Wright

Honorary Advisory Board

William Finney, George Latimer, Joseph S. Micallef,
Marvin J. Pertzik, James Reagan

Ramsey County Commissioners

Commissioner Toni Carter, *Chair*
Commissioner Nicole Joy Frethem
Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo
Commissioner Jim McDonough
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire
Commissioner Rafael E. Ortega
Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt

Ryan T. O'Connor, Manager, Ramsey County

Ramsey County History is published quarterly
by the Ramsey County Historical Society,
323 Landmark Center, 75 W. Fifth Street, Saint Paul,
MN 55102 (651-222-0701). Printed in U.S.A.
Copyright © 2021, Ramsey County Historical
Society. ISSN Number 0485-9758.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reprinted or otherwise reproduced
without written permission from the publisher.
The Society assumes no responsibility for
statements made by contributors.

RAMSEY COUNTY History

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future.

The Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) strives to innovate, lead, and partner in preserving the knowledge of our community, deliver inspiring history programming, and incorporate local history in education.

The Society was established in 1949 to preserve the Jane and Heman Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights, which the family acquired in 1849. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the original programs told the story of the Gibbs family. In 2000, with the assistance of a Dakota Advisory Council, RCHS also began interpreting Dakota culture and lifeways, now telling the stories of the remarkable relationship between Jane Gibbs and the Dakota people of Heyáta Othúnwe (Cloud Man's Village).

In 1964, the Society began publishing its award-winning magazine *Ramsey County History*. In 1978, the organization moved to St. Paul's Landmark Center, a restored Federal Courts building on the National Register of Historic Places. An expansion of the Research Center was completed in 2010 and rededicated in 2016 as the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center.

RCHS offers public programming for youth and adults. Visit www.rchs.com for details of upcoming History Revealed programs, summer camps, courthouse and depot tours, and more. The Society serves more than 15,000 students annually on field trips or through school outreach. Programs are made possible by donors, members, corporations, and foundations, all of whom we appreciate deeply. If you are not a member of RCHS, please join today and help bring history to life for more than 50,000 people every year.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, & Inclusion

RCHS is committed to ensuring it preserves and presents our county's history. As we continue our work to incorporate more culturally diverse histories, we have made a commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion that is based on this core idea: RCHS exists to serve ALL who call Ramsey County home. To learn more, please see www.rchs.com/about.

Acknowledging This Sacred Dakota Land

Mnisóta Makhóche, the land where the waters are so clear they reflect the clouds, extends beyond the modern borders of Minnesota and is the ancestral and contemporary homeland of the Dakhóta (Dakota) people. It is also home to the Anishinaabe and other Indigenous peoples, all who make up a vibrant community in Mnisóta Makhóche. RCHS acknowledges that its sites are located on and benefit from these sacred Dakota lands.

RCHS is committed to preserving our past, informing our present, and inspiring our future. Part of doing so is acknowledging the painful history and current challenges facing the Dakota people just as we celebrate the contributions of Dakota and other Indigenous peoples.

Find our full Land Acknowledgment Statement on our website, www.rchs.com. This includes actionable ways in which RCHS pledges to honor the Dakota and other Indigenous peoples of Mnisóta Makhóche.

R.C.H.S.
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



www.rchs.com

info@rchs.com

(651) 222-0701

Anne Field Named Chair of RCHS Editorial Board

Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) is pleased to announce that Anne Field has been named chair of the Society's Editorial Board. This group advises staff on publishing program policy and projects, assists with overall publishing efforts by connecting RCHS to writers and resources, as well as writing, editing, and reviewing manuscripts. Field, who is also on the RCHS Board of Directors, serves on the Collections Committee, and is co-chair of the Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) Committee, joined the Editorial Board in 2019. In her new role, she will lead monthly meetings, consult on editorial projects, oversee the production of *Ramsey County History* magazine, write its quarterly "Message from the Board" column, and offer insight into other publishing efforts.

"The work of the Editorial Board is essential in bringing unique and remarkable history content to the magazine, podcasts, books, and more," said RCHS President Chad Roberts. "We are thrilled to have Anne Field take on this essential leadership role. She brings a wealth of experience and passion for history to this outstanding team. High-quality research and publishing are at the center of what RCHS does. With Anne at the helm, I am confident we will continue to build on a tradition of excellence."

Field, a native of Minnesota's Iron Range and a graduate of the University of Minnesota, lives in Mendota Heights. She follows Anne Cowie, who has been involved with RCHS in different capacities since 1967. Cowie served as chair of the Editorial Board for the last fifteen years, overseeing sixty-two issues from Winter 2006 through Spring 2021, along with many other publishing projects. RCHS has greatly benefited from her insight and historical knowledge.

"Steadfast, inquisitive, thoughtful, and enthusiastic partner are all superlatives that start to tell the story of Anne Cowie and her time with RCHS," Roberts said. "It is a credit to her that *Ramsey County History* magazine is the field-leading publication it is today. We are grateful for her faithful commitment to the Society and local history as she continues to advise RCHS as an Editorial Board member."



Anne Field



Anne Cowie



Upcoming Events at RCHS & Gibbs Farm

September 2021

- Sept. 11 Gibbs Farm Tree Tour
- Sept. 16 *History Revealed: Hwy 61 Through Minnesota*
- Sept. 21 RCHS Member Celebration at Gibbs Farm
- Sept. 25 Gibbs Farm Apple Festival

October 2021

- Oct. 21 *History Revealed: St. Paul: An Urban Biography*
- Oct. 23 Gibbs Farm Volunteer Day
- Oct. 30 Gibbs Farm Halloween

For information & additional programs, see

www.rchs.com

or email events@rchs.com

R.C.H.S.
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Aesthetics of Bridge Design

A Paean to Two of St. Paul's Elegant Park Bridges

CHRISTINE PODAS-LARSON, PAGE 17



Canoers enjoy the view of the South Channel Bridge in 1905. By 1918, there were 1,000 privately owned canoes on Lake Phalen in addition to fifty canoes and eighty-five rowboats rented by the city. To read more about the bridge at Phalen Park and the Montreal Bridge at Highland Park, see Christine Podas-Larson's article on page 17. *Photograph by E. A. Bromley, courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*