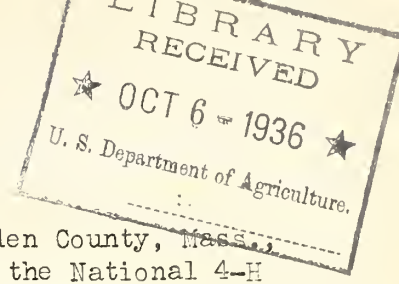


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CAPITALIZING ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AT HOME



A dialog between Chester Pilch, 4-H club member, Hampden County, Mass., and G. O. Oleson, Extension Editor, Amherst, Mass., given in the National 4-H Club Radio Program on June 6, 1936, and broadcast by a network of 55 associate NBC radio stations.

--ooOoo--

(Knock on door)

Oleson: Come in.

(Sound of door opening)

Chester: Good morning, sir. Are you Mr. Franklin?

Oleson: I am, and I suppose you're looking for a job. I am sorry but we haven't any opening right now. Just leave your name and address, and if anything shows up, we'll let you know.

Chester: Well, err-rr-rr, I'd hoped you might have a job for me. You see, I'm getting a little bit discouraged, since you're the sixth man this morning who has told me to leave my name and address.

Oleson: Yes, and you're the seventeenth man this morning that has asked me for a job.

And that little episode, Farm and Home listeners, based on actual fact was why Chester Pilch decided to stop looking for a job and to make one of his own or, as our program states, capitalize on business opportunities at home.

When Mr. Farley and I drove in to Chester's place to arrange for this program we found him busy putting baby chicks into the brooder house. When we explained the reason for our visit, he looked a bit embarrassed and said, "If you want to talk about farming, why don't you pick on some one who has a farm. We have only two acres."

But if I'm not careful I'll be getting ahead of our story, so first let's find out from Chester just when and how he became interested in 4-H club work and this business of farming.

Chester: Well, Mr. Oleson, it was in 1925. My brother gave me three colonies of bees, and I became a full fledged 4-H bee club member.

My second year, in addition to bees, I became interested in gardening and poultry. I was graduated from high school in 1931. During the summers I worked on neighboring farms and also carried on my various 4-H club projects and attended as many 4-H club meetings as possible, as well as county extension meetings.

(over)

Oleson: Yes, I remember that you were county poultry delegate to the state camp in 1929 and state delegate in 1933 and that you have been a local leader of poultry clubs for several years.

Now that brings us to the winter of 1931 and '32 which you spent looking for a job.

Chester: Yes, sir. After that experience I decided that something had to be done if I was going to do my share toward earning a decent living. Father is a jack-of-all-trades, being handy at carpentry, plumbing, masonry, etc. I have one brother about my own age who lives at home, my mother, and a younger brother who is still in school. I also have one brother away from home.

For farming opportunities we had available to rent a 30-acre farm across the street. This farm has peach and apple trees, a raspberry plantation, and a small vineyard. That first year, besides our market garden crops and other things, we raised about 500 chicks.

However, baby chicks is our main business at present, although we do have eight acres of sweet corn, some cauliflower, and other things on the farm. We like to think of our farming as a cooperative effort between mother, dad, my brothers, and myself. Of course, we hire extra help most of the time.

Oleson: Can you tell us, Chester, why you happened to develop the poultry business when you had all of these other farming enterprises on the string?

Chester: Poultry offered the best possibilities under our particular situation. We had a small farm and limited facilities, good land was not always available for renting, and furthermore in poultry your success depends upon your own initiative and not so much on other factors like land, weather, etc. We have gradually increased each year until this year we have hatched more than 80,000 chicks so far; about one-third of these being custom hatched. The hatch has averaged 83 percent. Our biggest week was 11,000 chicks. We installed a 35,000-egg capacity all-electric incubator this year. Our new incubator house, which is 20 by 30 and two stories in height, was built by father.

Oleson: You certainly must have quite a flock of hens, Chester, in order to supply eggs for hatching at that rate.

Chester: We keep about 1500 laying pullets of our own and we also have the eggs from another flock of about 900. This flock is the same breeding as our own, and they have been averaging 74 percent in laying so far this summer. This is what might be called a supervised flock so that the chicks hatched will be of the same or higher standard. This year the other owner has increased his layer capacity to 1500.

Oleson: You told us that day we visited you that you were doing baby chick sexing. Isn't that a comparatively new idea in the poultry business? And from what I have heard it is a rather difficult thing to do. Suppose you tell us what you do along that line.

Chester: Baby chick sexing is new in the east. I know of only three other poultry men who do this work. The segregation sure proved a benefit because it enabled us to move the cockerels rapidly to specialized broilers, and enabled us to sell our pullets more rapidly to those who wanted layers.

Oleson: How many chicks have you sexed so far this year?

Chester: Altogether, about 93,000. Some were for other poultrymen. In fact, about 28,000 were for Hall Brothers of Connecticut, the largest hatchery in New England.

Oleson: 93,000! How in the world can you do that and still take care of your business at home?

Chester: Well, as I told you before, mother and dad and my brother do most of the work. It is more or less up to me to provide ideas. I take care of the sexing, the buying and selling, the advertising, and supervise the hatching and breeding work. This year I hit upon the idea of using an oculist glass in the segregation work. This gives great magnification and enables me to work at the rate of 800 an hour. I have been averaging about 90 percent accuracy on this work, but with the new glass I should be able to step up the accuracy to 95 percent.

Oleson: Well, well, can you imagine that? Separating the cockerels from the pullets when the chicks are only a day old at the rate of 800 an hour and doing it with 90 to 95 percent accuracy.

One more question, Chester, and that is - Do local poultrymen buy all of your chicks?

Chester: Yes, most of our chicks go to poultrymen near home. On Memorial Day weekend we were very busy from morning until night, selling chicks. Many of the people took only half a dozen, but they all count as customers and they tell others when they are satisfied. One time I counted ten cars in the yard. But we also have customers in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania who are beginning to purchase our chicks, and we have assurance that more orders are coming from these other states in the future, which means that we can expand.

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