

using this method perform all the marketing services performed by the conventional marketing system plus delivery of items to the consumer's door. This method was relatively important in past years, especially for products such as milk, butter, and eggs that were purchased regularly and could be delivered on a consistent schedule. ^{8/}

THE 1979 SURVEY

The survey of direct-marketing farmers conducted during December 1979 in Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Wisconsin revealed that approximately 44,000 farmers in those States (about 15 percent of all farmers in those States) sold about \$260 million worth of farm products directly to consumers in 1979 (table 1).

The leading products sold, by dollar value, were floral and nursery products (including bedding plants), apples, strawberries, peaches, sweet corn, tomatoes, livestock and poultry products, dairy products, and honey and syrups. The only States in the survey with a significant volume of dairy product sales were New York, Colorado, and the three southern New England States.

When asked to indicate their plans for direct marketing over the next 5 years, about 38 percent of all the farmers responding said they plan to continue at the same level as in 1979 (table 2). Almost 28 percent said they would increase their direct marketings, about 15 percent planned to reduce their direct marketings, and about 20 percent were undecided.

The \$260 million in direct sales to consumers by those farmers who sold all or part of their total production through direct sales methods represented only 2 percent of total sales of all farmers in the nine States but 24 percent of total sales of the farmers in those States who sold some or all of their product directly to consumers. ^{9/} The percentage of total production of specific farm products by farmers selling directly to consumers in the nine States varied from about 4 percent for plums and sweetpotatoes to 84 percent for strawberries and 97 percent for other berries (mainly blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries). The percentage of production of direct-marketing farmers that was sold direct in each State was associated with the size of operation, availability of harvest labor, and the availability of conventional market outlets, which in turn depends on the volume of commercial production. For example, over 60 percent of the apple crop was sold direct to consumers in Tennessee and Wisconsin; but in Colorado, New York, and Maryland, where apples are produced chiefly by large, specialized growers, 20 percent or less of apple production was sold

^{8/} The sales volume sold to consumers by this method in the States surveyed in 1979 and 1980 was not of sufficient magnitude to warrant separate tabulation.

^{9/} Based on total units produced (bushels, pounds, dozen, etc.) and units sold direct to consumers weighted by dollar value of direct sales of specific products.