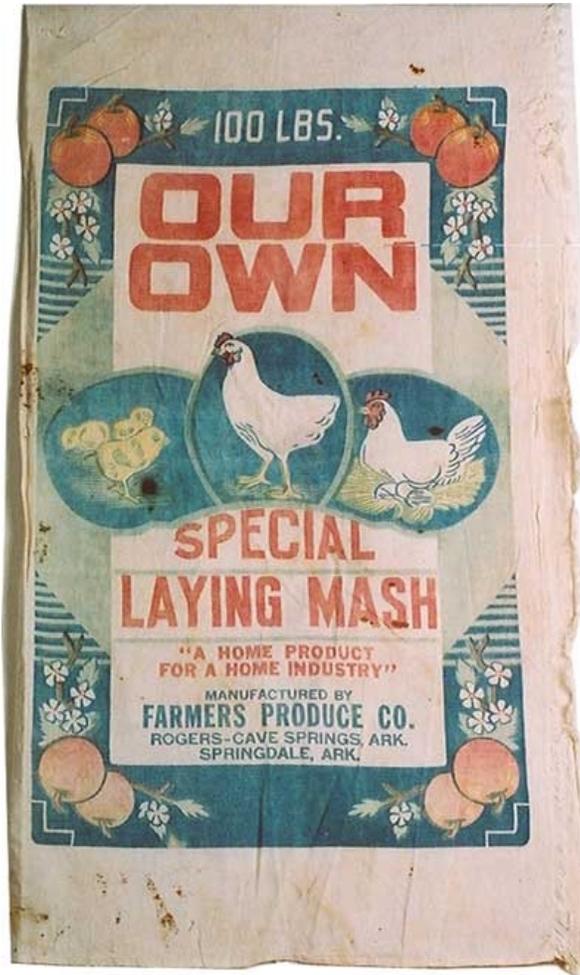


Donation of the Month

Farmers Produce Co. Feed Sack



1996.45.2 Donor: Barry Houglan

“A Home Product for A Home Industry”

Chickens have played an important role in the history of Northwest Arkansas. Tyson Foods, the world’s largest poultry company, grew out of one man delivering fruit, hay, and chickens for local farmers around Springdale, Arkansas. However, chickens were big business in much of Northwest Arkansas, including Rogers.

Local farmers had been raising chickens before the turn of the 20th century, but Rogers was known more for its fruit production, especially apples, as evident in the name “The Land of the Big Red Apple.” However, by the later 1920s, the apples were affected by disease while the poultry industry continued to grow. In 1938 Benton County became the national leader in broiler chicken production. It was the beginning of a new era for Northwest Arkansas.

One of the Benton County poultry pioneers was Charles L. Garrett of Rogers, who owned the Farmers Produce Company. Garrett started his business in Cave Springs, Arkansas in 1920 selling fruit, vegetables, poultry, and eggs. In 1930 he expanded his business to Rogers and two years later, added

poultry feed production. Eventually he discontinued fruits and vegetables in favor of feed products which were manufactured under the label "Our Own." Garrett was one of several industry leaders to begin selling both feed and chicks as well as providing a credit line for buying market chickens all within the same company rather than from separate sources.

This feed sack is one from the "Our Own" brand sold by the Farmers Produce Company. One hundred pounds of feed were available in this cotton sack with colorful imagery that expressed the company's Northwest Arkansas origins. We see the red apple fruit and white blossoms in the corners and the Farmers Produce Company logo below the slogan "A Home Product for A Home Industry." The Farmers Produce Company, later called Garrett's Poultry Company, expanded its poultry production by processing chickens in a plant in Rogers, operating a hatchery, and operating the Warehouse Super-Market. In 1963, it was acquired by Tyson Foods, which continues the successful traditions of Northwest Arkansas poultry production started by local farmers who became industry pioneers.

Credits: "History Timeline," Tyson Foods, <http://www.tyson.com/Corporate/AboutTyson/History/Timeline.aspx>. Bland, Gaye, "Earning a reputation with the 'Chicken of Tomorrow,'" from the Rogers Hometown News, May 17, 1999. "Farmers Produce Company Feed Mill," photograph from the Rogers Daily News, August 28, 1956. "Farmers Produce Co." from A Message to the Homeseeker, 1938. Donor file and Research Library file, "Farmers Produce Company," Rogers Historical Museum.