

Transport

A Self Study Guide for Members and Staff of Agricultural Cooperatives

LESSON FIVE: Vehicle scheduling



Objective: To explain the importance of planning how vehicles are to be used and introducing a requisition system to make this process easier and avoid misuse of transport.

Once you have selected the best vehicle for your co-operative and have bought it in the most economical way, your responsibilities as manager have only begun. Your task now is to make your system of transport as efficient and economic as possible.

- A given society had three trucks. Some days they were so busy that produce would go bad for lack of transport; other days the vehicles had nothing to do. The last two days of every month all trucks were in for service; nothing could then be moved at all. The manager insisted he needed at least one more truck to cope with all the requests for transport.

Poor management like this can easily render any investment in vehicles unprofitable, no matter how carefully it was made. The proper use of vehicles is as important as their careful selection and purchase. In transport management, this means careful scheduling - making the most effective use of the vehicles you have before seeking outside resources.

Scheduling means that you:

- *find out in advance what the transport needs are;*
- *balance the available transport against the needs;*
- *decide what tasks must be done at specific particular times, and what can be more flexibly timed;*
- *allocate the vehicles to the tasks;*
- *draw up a programme stating what vehicles are doing what, when;*
- *leave some flexibility for unexpected needs or problems;*
- *monitor, maintain and (when necessary) modify the programme as it is implemented.*

For effective scheduling it is necessary to have one person responsible for all these tasks. (It may be the manager himself, a staff member designated as transport supervisor or a special transport manager.) He will have to ascertain the transport needs and decide how each vehicle is to be used, every day.

If you only have one or two vehicles and they routinely perform the same tasks, you may not need a formal system. But you still must know their functions and locations at all times, if only to be able to re-arrange them if something unexpected comes up.

If you have more than two or three vehicles, however, a requisition system is in order. Anyone then requesting transport should give the responsible manager a "requisition form" like the one on the next page.

TRANSPORT REQUISITION		
To: Transport Supervisor, Alpha Co-operative		
From: <u>H. Green</u> Section: <u>M</u> Date: <u>20.5.87</u>		
LOAD Description: <u>Maize, 22 bags</u>		
Weight: <u>1100 kg</u>		
COLLECTION DATE and TIME: Earliest: <u>24.5 8⁰⁰</u> Latest: <u>25.5 16⁰⁰</u>		
COLLECTION POINT: <u>Valley Buying Station</u>		
DELIVERY POINT: <u>Alpha Godown</u>		
TRANSPORT COSTS TO BE CHARGED TO:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Supply Section	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marketing Section	<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Section
REMARKS: <u>Please inform Johnson about delivery time.</u>		
For Transport Supervisor's Notes		
VEHICLE: _____ COLLECTION TIME: _____		

Ask yourself some questions about your transport operations:

- Are your vehicles ever used for illicit purposes?
- Is it ever difficult to pin down who authorised a journey or to what department it should be charged?
- Are vehicles idle at some times and urgently needed in several places at other times?

You can eliminate most such problems with a requisition system. Our model form is quite simple. Only certain people in the co-operative have the right to request transport; the transport supervisor accepts requisitions only from them. The forms help him to schedule the journeys effectively - and provide a way to check that the vehicles have not taken any unnecessary or illicit trips.

To facilitate the work of the transport supervisor, his colleagues in the co-operative should submit their requests to give him adequate preparation time. He can then lay out a more effective transport schedule.

We will show an example here. It concerns a transport supervisor, Mr. Tarus of Alpha Co-operative, who had one truck (five-ton) and one pick-up (one-ton) at his disposal. His drivers worked from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. with an hour for lunch. On Saturday, Tarus received transport requisitions for the following tasks:

- A. Daily: collect four tons of produce; a three-hour task; to be completed by 3 p.m.
- B. Daily: drive the chief clerk to town for one hour (to go to bank, post office, etc.); must leave after 8 a.m. and return by 1 p.m.

- C. As soon as possible: take a ten-ton fertiliser load from the manufacturer's store to the society; five hours duration.
- D. As soon as possible: collect approximately 50 kg of machine spare parts from the depot; a two-hour journey.
- E. As convenient: collect and deliver 100 tons of gravel; a one-hour task for each trip.
- F. Monday: deliver a three-ton load any time after 1 p.m.; a two-hour task.
- G. Tuesday: take manager and chief clerk to capital to visit the bank head office; a seven-hour journey.
- H. Friday: collect two tons of supplies, not before 12 noon; a three-hour task.
- I. Saturday: collect cashier from a training course; a three-hour journey; must leave after 8 a.m.

With these requisitions in his hand, Tarus started to work out a schedule. He simply used a chalkboard on the wall, where he indicated when the various tasks should be done, and by whom. You can see his schedule on the next page.

Of course, Tarus knew that there would be changes in his schedule during the week. For instance:

- vehicles might break down;
- loads might not be ready in time;
- staff (drivers and helpers) might not turn up or perform as expected;
- extra urgent tasks might suddenly have to be done.

Some people argue that because of such problems, it is a waste of time even to try to plan out a schedule. It is rarely, if ever, possible to stick to it.

But Tarus has a different experience: "My schedule is most useful when things go wrong. I can see at once when we can do some extra jobs, which tasks will have to be cancelled or how we should modify the plans. The point is to have a clearly presented schedule which can easily be amended."

For instance, during the next week, the following happened:

- On Tuesday afternoon Tarus was asked when he could first move a four-ton load, a task taking three hours. He could immediately see that the pick-up would be available and could do the job in four three-hour trips on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
- On Wednesday afternoon the pick-up had the exhaust pipe damaged on a bad road. Tarus told the driver to fix the pipe on Thursday morning, and to do his daily run to town late, at 9 a.m.

Preparing a schedule is a means of planning transport and a useful tool when dealing with problems, as we have seen. But an efficient transport manager should also try to anticipate and eliminate problems.

There are certain things he must do:

- have regular maintenance scheduling;
- motivate drivers by setting standard times for journeys, loading and unloading;
- ensure that drivers can obtain the help needed loading and unloading;
- allocate adequate time for journeys according to road and vehicle conditions.

		7 am	8	9	10	11	12	1 pm	2	3	4
MONDAY	Truck Pick-up	A	B+D					F		E	
TUESDAY	Truck Pick-up	C <i>VIA TRUCK</i>	B+G				A ↑ LUNCH ↓ ?	G			
WEDNESDAY	Truck Pick-up	C	B				A				
THURSDAY	Truck Pick-up	E	F B	E	E		A <i>John</i>				
FRIDAY	Truck Pick-up	A	B		E	E		H			
SATURDAY	Truck Pick-up	E	E B	E I			A				





Describe a system for requisition of transport services which would be suitable for your co-operative. In particular, point out:

- i. who is authorised to order transport services;
- ii. how requests should be made (orally or in writing);
- iii. what the requisition form should look like (if used);
- iv. how the requisition form is used (who fills it out, who receives and uses it, who files it);
- v. how the costs for transport are calculated and allocated within the society.