



The world's oldest turkey marketing cooperative.

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### The History of Norbest, Inc.

Norbest, Inc., headquartered in Midvale, Utah, is a federated marketing cooperative dealing exclusively with turkeys and value-added turkey products. It is the largest cooperative organization of its type in the world, and is one of the top turkey marketing firms in the United States.

Norbest's cooperative members include turkey producer/processor cooperatives in the states of Utah and Nebraska, consisting of approximately 125 independent turkey growers.

Norbest had its early roots in the early 1920's as a producer-owned marketing cooperative called Utah Poultry. In 1930 Utah Poultry, along with other related businesses from Utah, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, and Nevada combined to form the first regional turkey marketing co-op in the United States. Its headquarters was established in Salt Lake City, Utah, on October 9, 1930. The new cooperative was known as Northwestern Turkey Growers Association.

The objectives of the new association were to "produce and pack a higher grade of birds, to establish a known quality...to eliminate as much speculation as possible...and pack a product, using federal grades, of uniform standard quality that will command both respect and the confidence of buyers." In its first year of operations, the co-op had revenues of one million dollars on 3.5 million pounds of product; a far cry from the 130 million pounds annually produced by Norbest today.

The Northwestern Turkey Growers Association was among the first to adopt federal grading standards. Throughout its second year of operation, Northwestern received a "Number One" grade, which proved to be a significant marketing advantage. Ever since, the co-op has adhered to the highest government and industry standards of quality. Today all Norbest® branded whole birds are USDA Grade A — the highest grade possible.

A familiar trademark was needed to help consumers recognize the new co-op's products. Someone suggested "Norwest", short for Northwestern Turkey Growers Association. This was soon changed to "Norbest®". The new brand proved so popular that after a few years the cooperative changed its name to Norbest Turkey Growers Association, and later to Norbest, Inc.

Despite the Great Depression, Norbest stepped up promotional efforts. In 1936 Norbest hit a publicity jackpot with the presentation of a large turkey to President Franklin D. Roosevelt just before Thanksgiving. This holiday tradition continues today through annual presentations by the National Turkey Federation.

During World War II turkey became a mainstay of U.S. troops serving both at home and abroad. Norbest earned the Armed Forces Meritorious Services Award for Outstanding Performance in supplying the Quartermaster Corps.

After the war domestic demand for turkey lagged behind the production capacity built to cover wartime needs. Norbest researchers set about to improve the appeal of turkey as an everyday menu item. Norbest became an industry leader in improvements in breeding, growing, processing, and marketing of turkeys. It was the first marketing group to sell fully eviscerated, ready to cook turkeys. (Prior to this time turkeys were sold "New York Dressed", with the head, feet, and viscera still intact.)

The following years saw an expansion of the whole bird business, as well as strong strides in marketing bone-in breasts and parts. Based on successful wartime experience, these years also heralded an international expansion, leading to the awarding in 1964 of the President's "E" award for excellence in exporting.

Recognizing the homemaker's need for more convenient products, Norbest again became the leader in new product development in the 1960's and 1970s. Norbest was first with the Tender-Timer® pop-up cooking gauge that pops its stem at precisely the time when the turkey is done. Norbest also led the way with pre-basted turkeys and bone-in breasts, and with boneless roasts and other successful new products.

Other product line extensions have followed over the years. Today Norbest offers a full line of raw and cooked further processed products including bone-in breasts and boneless roasts for both retail and foodservice; ground turkey; turkey steaks; cooked, roasted, and smoked deli breasts; turkey ham; and a host of other fine products.

All this growth has been built on traditions of high quality and the strength of a popular brand name. The Norbest® brand is one of the world's best known and respected. Norbest® products are sold throughout the United States as well as in Pacific Rim countries, Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

Membership in the Norbest cooperative has changed a few times over the 69 years of its existence, as local farmer co-ops have merged, dissolved, or changed focus. Today the members of the Norbest, Inc. cooperative are Moroni Feed Company in central Utah, and Nebraska Turkey Growers Cooperative in Nebraska.

The continuing progress of Norbest, Inc. is still in keeping with the original objectives set by the founders in 1930 by providing unique marketing opportunities for independent turkey growers. Nowhere is teamwork more visible than in a cooperative; and nowhere is it more tangible than at Norbest. This philosophy is reflected in Norbest's cooperative mission statement:

"The purpose of Norbest, Inc. is to deliver maximum long-term return to our producer members by strategically marketing high-quality turkey products worldwide. This requires total commitment to provide both our trade customers and our ultimate consumers consistently high-quality product and service."

Norbest fulfills this mission by providing sales, marketing, product development, strategic planning, operations, quality assurance, data processing, and administrative operations support to its members, and the highest quality products and excellent service to its customers.

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