# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x' in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

historic name Producers Produce Company Plant	
other name/site number <u>N/A</u>	<u></u>
street & town 501 North Main Avenue	n/a not for publication
city or town Springfield	n/a vicinity
state Missouri code MO county Greene code 0	77 zip code <u>65806</u>
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for regist of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that the nationally statewide locally. See continuation sheet for additional commentation of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO  Missouri Department of Natural Resources State or Federal agency and bureau  In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (comments.)  Signature of certifying official/Title Date	sering properties in the National Register 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the his property be considered significant ents.)  Date
State or Federal agency and bureau	
I hereby certify that the property is:  ☐ entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet. ☐ determined eligible for the	Date of Action
National Register ☐ See continuation sheet. ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.	
☐ removed from the National Register. ☐ other, (explain:)	

Name of Property		County and S	State		
5. Classification					
Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)			
		Contributing	Noncontributing		
□ private	building(s)	9	3	buildings	
public-local	district			 sites	
public-State	site			 structures	
☐ public-Federal	☐ structure			_ objects	
	☐ object	9	3	– Total	
	□ object	9	3	Total	
Name of related multiple prop (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a		Number of contrib	outing resources pre	viously listed	
		iii tile National Re	gistei		
Historic and Architectural Res	ources of Springfield, Missouri	0		_	
6. Function or Use					
<b>Historic Function</b>		Current Fu			
(Enter categories from instructions)		(Enter categor	ries from instructions)		
Industry: Industrial Storage		Vacant			
Commerce: Warehouse					
Agricultural: Processing					
7 Description					
7. Description Architectural Classification		Materials			
(Enter categories from instructions)			ries from instructions)		
Other: Factory		foundation	Concrete		
		walls	Brick		
			Concrete		
		roof	Concrete		
		other			
Narrative Description		tionation above.			
(Describe the historic and current cond	lition of the property on one or more con	tinuation sneets.)			

Greene County, MO

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Producers Produce Company Plant

Producers Produce Company Plant	Greene County, MO
Name of Property	County and State
8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria	Areas of Significance
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property	(enter categories from instructions)
for National Register listing.)	(onto salegorios nom monutations)
	Industry
a significant contribution to the broad patterns of	
our history.	
_	
☐ <b>B</b> Property is associated with the lives of persons	
significant in our past.	
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics	
of a type, period, or method of construction or	
represents the work of a master, or possesses	
high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack	
individual distinction.	
iliaiviauai aistiliction.	
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield,	Period of Significance
information important in prehistory or history.	1920-1960
information important in prehistory of history.	1920-1900
Criteria Considerations	Significant Dates
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	1935
Property is:	1943
Troporty io.	1946
☐ <b>A</b> owned by a religious institution or used for	1947
religious purposes.	1951
3 [ . ]	Significant Persons
☐ <b>B</b> removed from its original location.	(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
_ ,	N/A
☐ <b>C</b> a birthplace or grave.	
	Cultural Affiliation
D a cemetery.	N/A
_	
☐ <b>E</b> a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	
☐ <b>F</b> a commemorative property.	Architect/Builder
	Unknown
☐ <b>G</b> less than 50 years of age or achieved significance	
within the past 50 years.	-
Newstive Statement of Significance	
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	
(Explain the significance of the property of one of more continuation sheets.)	⊠See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8
9. Major Bibliographical References	2000 continuation on oct (b) for occition 140. o
Bibliography	
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more cont	inuation sheets.
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:
preliminary determination of individual listing (36	State Historic Preservation Office
CFR 67) has been requested	Other State agency
previously listed in the National Register	Federal agency
previously determined eligible by the National	Local government
Register	University
designated a National Historic Landmark	☐ Other Name of repository:
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey	
#	
recorded by Historic American Engineering	
Record #	
	See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Prodcers Produce Company Plant	Greene County, MO
Name of Property	County and State
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property approx 5.5 acres	
<b>UTM References</b> (Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	
1 1/5	2 / Zone Easting Northing
3 / / //// / //// //// Zone Easting Northing	4 / Zone Easting Northing
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.) See Attached	
Property Tax No.	
<b>Boundary</b> Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.) See Attached	See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Julie Ann LaMouria	
organization Lafser & Associates	date October 30, 2009
street & number 20 N Main STE 101	
city or town Cape Girardeau	state MO zip code 63701
Additional Documentation Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets  Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the properties having the properties having the properties having Photographs: Representative black and white photographs Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items).	g large acreage or numerous resources. of the property.
Property Owner	
name/title Joe Costello, Fast Finish LLC	
street & number_PO Box 8099	telephone
city or town Springfield	state MO zip code 65801
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for approperties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to an	

benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	7	Page	1	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Archi	tectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

#### Summary

The Producers Produce Company Plant sits on City Block 408 on the west side of N Main Avenue between West Phelps and West Tampa Streets (501 N. Main) in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri. Constructed between 1905 and 1980, the Producers Produce Company Plant acted as a wholesale poultry packing and egg factory until it closed in 2008. It is comprised of eleven interconnected brick and concrete buildings and an unconnected freight station (9 contributing, 3 noncontributing). It is surrounded on the north and west by parking lots. The most decorative building in the complex is the 1920 two-story red brick Poultry Storage building, at the southeast corner of the site. It features six bays of four wood sash windows on the second level, and four loading doors, separated by paired wood sash windows on the first level. The company's moniker is painted on the parapet wall, intact raised skylights remain on the roof, and the sloping street reveals the concrete foundation on the southern half of the building. Two and three story red brick buildings were added to the Poultry Storage building between 1935 and 1946, including an Office and Packing Building, Egg Preparation Room, and Egg Drying Building. Across the alley, a blonde brick Packing Plant was constructed in 1947, attached to the Office and Packing Building by a second floor enclosed bridge. Two concrete cold storage buildings were constructed at the west end of the property in 1951, and a small concrete Engine Room was added in 1953. A 1908 red brick toy factory building was absorbed by the complex by 1950 and used as a Fertilizing Plant. This building is obscured from West Tampa Street by a 1980, one-story concrete block building. Nearly all of the interconnected buildings experienced concrete block window infill prior to covering the building in metal paneling in 1963. In September of 2009, these metal panels were removed to reveal the original brick facades. Across the northern parking lot, a 1949 one-story blonde brick freight station faces West Tampa Street. This building features dock bays at the rear and wood doors and windows on its projecting north entrance. The complex represents the utilitarian design of Industrial/ Warehouse buildings as specified in the "Industrial Development in Springfield, MO" amendment to the Multiple Property Documentation Form for Historical and Architectural Resources in Springfield, MO. The buildings are in good condition, primarily featuring open floor plans with concrete or brick columns and sloped concrete floors. The complex continues to convey its function as a poultry packing plant, retaining most of its historic design, and relatively unchanged since the period of significance.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	7	Page	2	<b>Producers Produce Company Plant</b>
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Ar	chitectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

#### **Elaboration**

#### Site

The Producers Produce Company Plant is located in Springfield, occupying a site bounded by West Tampa Street on the north, North Main Avenue on the east, and West Phelps Street on the south. The areas to the east and south of the Producers Produce complex are industrial in nature. The North Grant Avenue concrete bridge is located on the west side of the property, with a small alley between the nominated property and bridge's structural system.

The plant consists of nine interconnected buildings constructed between 1908 and 1980<sup>1</sup> (See Floor Plans: Figures 1-3). In addition, a 1949 freight station is found near the north end of the property, and a few metal outbuildings are present near the main plant (See Figure 4). Each building was used for a specific purpose, and thus constructed as its own structure to best accommodate its purpose. Descriptions of each building are as follows:

## Poultry Storage (1920) Contributing

Photo # 1-5

#### East Elevation

The first building constructed for the poultry packing plant was the 1920 building at the corner of North Main Avenue and West Phelps Street (Photo # 1). Built for the Farm Club Cold Storage Company, the red brick building is two-stories tall with a concrete foundation and a flat roof. The first level of the main façade features four truck dock openings, separated by paired, nine-over-nine, wood sash windows. The sixteen-light wood transom windows are intact above the door openings, though the doors have been removed and insulation now bulges from the interior. An entrance door opening is found in the second bay, but has been boarded over for security reasons. Wood sash windows, found in sets of four, fill the six bays of the second level. The windows of the southern two bays retain the original six-pane, tri-part windows. The remaining bays feature one-over-one glazing, with the original framing intact. The company name and the trademark of the Missouri Farmers Association are painted on the parapet. Metal

<sup>1</sup> Building permits were not available for the Producers Produce Company Plant. Construction and alteration dates are based on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the Assessor's Office website, aerial photograph from the 1930s, company building sketch from 1940s, and company histories found in articles and books. For this reason, no architect was found for the structures.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _	7	Page	3	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	itectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

panels were applied to the building in 1963 by attaching wood supports to the window and door frames. Though the panels were removed in September of 2009, the wood supports remain at this time but will be removed as part of the rehabilitation.

#### South Elevation

Wood sash windows, in sets of four, are found on the second level. The original three-part six light glazing is found in the first, sixth, seventh, and eighth bays. The remaining bays retain only the original window frames, with insulation protruding through the empty openings. Metal panels were applied to the second level of this façade in 1963 by attaching wood supports to the window frames. Though the panels were removed in September of 2009, the wood supports remain at the time of nomination. A metal, overhead sliding dock door and metal entrance are located in the eastern bay of the first level. A cinder block enclosed loading dock spans five bays of the first level, featuring a metal overhead dock door at its eastern end. The dock wall slopes back toward the original brick wall below the sixth bay of the second floor. A historic metal awning spans the south elevation between the first and second levels (Photo 2).

#### West Elevation

The west elevation is connected to the 1935 Office and Packing Building and is unseen.

### North Elevation

The north elevation is comprised of a blank brick wall. This elevation was historically connected to another two-story building, which was demolished after the period of significance. A few bricked-in windows can be seen on the first level (Photo 3).

#### Roof

There are two clerestory skylights on the roof of the building. Each features the original wood windows and trusses. Metal panels were applied to the skylights in 1963, preserving the original materials. The metal panels were removed in September of 2009.

#### Interior

Used as the original office and storage facility, the building is divided into two sections. Small rooms for offices are found on both the first and second level, along the eastern wall. The remainder of the building is open for storage space, retaining the original wood floors, trusses, stairs and door frames, as well as the steel support columns (Photos 4 & 5).

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	7	Page	4	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Ar	chitectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

#### Office and Packing Plant (1935) Contributing

Photo # 2, 6-8

#### South Elevation

In 1935 the company constructed a two story office and packing plant for its new endeavor: dressed meat. This two-story red brick building features a stepped roofline and a raised concrete foundation. The eight bay building was remodeled in 1963, resulting in the concrete block infill of many of the windows and the application of metal panels. The panels were affixed to the walls with wood forms attached to the cinder blocks. When the metal panels were removed in September of 2009, pairs of single pane fixed windows were found in the eastern three bays of the second level. The wood forms remain. A metal and glass conveyor door is found in the western bay of the second level (Photo 6)

#### West Elevation

The west elevation faces the factory's internal alley. The red brick wall features two bays of cinder block filled window openings on each floor. Enclosed bridges in the north and south bay of the second floor connect this building to the 1947 Packing Plant across the alley (Photo 7).

#### North Elevation

The north elevation is connected to the 1943 Egg Preparing Department, and obscured from view.

#### East Elevation

The east elevation is connected to the 1920 Poultry Storage Building. Only the southern bay is exposed, comprised of a pair of single pane fixed metal windows on the second level, and a full story opening on the first level secured with chain gates (Photo 2).

#### **Roof Elevation**

The roof features a brick, clerestory skylight with wire glass industrial metal windows.

#### Interior

The interior of the building features a modern breakroom and office space on the second level, with metal doors and door frames, asbestos floor tile, and vinyl baseboards (Photo 8). The first level packing plant has an open floor plan with mushroom shaped concrete columns and sloped drains in the floor (Photo 9).

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	7	Page	5	<b>Producers Produce Company Plant</b>
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	nitectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

### Egg Preparation Department (1943, c.1960) Contributing

Photo # 10-14

#### East Elevation

The company constructed a two-building egg complex in 1943 to handle all of the checking, cleaning, drying, and shipping processes. The Egg Preparation Room is a two-story brick building with a stone foundation and a flat roof. The east elevation was previously adjoined to a produce company building (not affiliated with Producers Produce). When the produce building was demolished after the period of significance, the Egg Preparation Room's east elevation was revealed. The east elevation is primarily a blank, red brick wall, with concrete structural system exposed on the third level. Four bays of window openings have been bricked-in on the third level (Photo 10).

#### South Elevation

The south elevation is adjoined to the 1935 Office and Packing Plant and unseen.

#### West Elevation

A one-story concrete block loading dock is located at the northern corner of the west elevation. It includes a rolling overhead dock door that opens to the north. Above this, only the concrete structural system of the second floor is visible. A blank, red brick wall with exposed concrete structural system comprises the remainder of the western elevation.

#### North Elevation

Three bays of concrete block fill the second level window openings of the north elevation, the only portion visible beyond the Egg Drying Building (Photo 11).

#### Roof

A square red brick tower three stories in height is located near the southern wall of the building (Photo 12). This structure contains a concrete band near the roofline, and one opening containing sixteen-light industrial metal windows on the north, east, and west elevations. The opening on the south elevation has been filled with glass block.

#### Interior

The interior features glazed brick walls and mushroom shaped concrete supports in open floor plans (Photo 13 & 14).

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	7	Page	6	Producers Produce Company Plant
		_		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Ar	chitectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

**Egg Drying Building** (1943, 1946, c.1960) Contributing

Photo # 15-18

#### East Elevation

The red brick Egg Drying Building was constructed in 1943. It has a concrete foundation and flat roof. The east elevation features a one-story, one bay deep red brick loading dock and engine room. A rolling overhead garage door is found at the southern corner. A three-story square portion of the building is recessed one bay. The eastern wall is relatively blank, with the exception of three concrete block filled openings on the third level (Photo 15).

#### South Elevation

Most of this elevation is hidden by the 1943 Egg Preparation Room. However, the thirdstory is exposed, featuring a blank brick wall and concrete band at the roofline.

#### West Elevation

The west elevation includes a one-story concrete block shipping and storage room with two open bays, which are secured by chain link gates. A 1946, second floor tower protrudes near the northern wall, featuring a brick wall with a concrete block filled opening and a concrete band at the roofline. The three-story portion features three concrete block filled openings on this elevation (Photo 16).

#### North Elevation

The first level of the north elevation features three concrete block-filled openings in the eastern bays, with two sets of single-pane fixed windows found in triplicate just west of center. The concrete block of the 1960s addition creates the remainder of the first level. There are no openings on the second level, and two openings on the third level have been bricked in (Photo 16).

#### Interior

The interior of the building is primarily open. The 1960 addition has a sloped concrete floor, which connects to an open hallway in the 1946 addition (Photo 17). The egg drying room is three-stories tall with glazed brick walls and two large fans suspended in the top level (Photo 18).

The 1946 addition to the building is woven seamlessly to the original structure, and does not detract from its architectural and functional design. The 1960 concrete block addition obstructs the view of the building's first level on the western façade, but was used as an enclosed loading dock, which reinforces the building's industrial significance.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _	7	Page	7	Producers Produce Company Plant
				Greene County, MO
		Histor	ric and Arc	hitectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

In addition, this portion of the building is easily removed without dramatic damage to the 1946 shipping and storage department.

Packing Plant (1947)

Contributing

Photo # 19-21, 7

### South Elevation

The two-story blonde brick packing plant has a concrete foundation and a flat roof. The first level features an overhead rolling dock door in the eastern bay, and a raised, one-bay wide opening in the western bay, secured by a chain link gate. Two window openings, located between the dock door and doorless opening, have been filled with concrete block. The second level features a single, fixed pane window in the southern two bays, and brick filled openings in the northern two bays. A second level bridge connects the Packing Plant to the 1935 Office and Packing Plant. With an open space on the first level, the bridge has an exposed steel girder, blonde brick facing, and two concrete block filled openings (Photo 19).

#### West Elevation

The west elevation of this building is hidden by Cold Storage Building A, and unseen.

#### North Elevation

The north elevation of this building is hidden by the Fertilizing Plant, and unseen.

#### East Elevation

The east elevation of the building is concealed below a roof, facing the alley. It features blonde brick with two concrete block filled openings on the second level, and one-bay opening on the first level. A concrete block bridge is found at the north end of the elevation, connecting it to the office and packing plant (Photo 7). A concrete block office room covers the northern half of the first level.

#### Interior

The interior of the building was designed with sloping concrete floors and glazed brick walls. The floor plan is basically open with concrete supports. Concrete chemical tubs snake through the second floor, and deep drains are covered by metal grates (Photos 20 & 21). Below the building is a 12,000 gallon tank for collecting refuse.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	7	Page	8	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arcl	nitectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

### Cold Storage Building A (1951) Contributing

Photo# 22-24

#### South Elevation

Cold Storage A is a three-story building sheathed in concrete panels with a flat roof. The south elevation is completely blank. A one-story concrete block loading dock projects along the first level, with rolling dock doors on its east elevation, west elevation, and centered on the southern façade (Photo 22).

#### West Elevation

The west elevation is also windowless, and sheathed in concrete panels. A one-story concrete block dock covers the southern half of the first level, with the northern corner projecting west to the end of the property (Photo 23).

#### North Elevation

The majority of the north elevation is hidden by Cold Storage Building B. The other half is hidden by a metal conveyor tunnel.

#### **East Elevation**

The east elevation is connected to the 1947 Packing Plant, and unseen.

#### Interior

The interior floors of Cold Storage Building A are essentially the same. Each features an open floor plan with concrete columns, and floors. There are no windows, and metal "brine" tubing runs along the ceiling in order to keep the building at a controlled temperature (Photo 24).

#### Cold Storage Building B (1951) Contributing

Photo # 25-27

#### West Elevation

Cold Storage Building B is a three-story concrete building with a flat roof, and in the shape of an "L." The west elevation is sheathed in concrete panels. In the "elbow" portion of this façade sits a concrete and cinder block one-story loading dock with an overhead rolling, metal door on the south and north ends, and a metal entrance door in the center (Photo 25).

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	7	Page	9	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arcl	nitectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

#### North Elevation

Only the third level of the north elevation is visible, and most of it is covered behind a concrete block one-story loading dock with two rolling overhead metal doors located just west of center (Photo 26).

#### East Elevation

The majority of the east elevation is hidden by the engine room. The southern portion that is exposed features a concrete panel sheathed wall with a metal door opening to a steel stairwell landing.

#### South Elevation

The south elevation is completely hidden by Cold Storage Building A.

#### Interior

The interior of this building looks nearly identical to Cold Storage Building B, featuring concrete floors, ceilings, and supports, as well as open floor plans and "brine" tubing on the ceilings (Photo 27).

### **Engine Room** (1953, 1954) Contributing

#### North Elevation

The engine room was constructed in 1953 to support the cold storage buildings. An addition was constructed on its southern elevation in 1954. The one-story engine room is sheathed in concrete panels. The north elevation features four, six pane metal windows. The rest of the elevation is hidden by steel structural supports that held machinery until the plant was closed.

#### East Elevation

The east elevation is hidden by the 1980 Storage building.

#### South Elevation

The east half of the south building is obscured by the Fertilizing Building. The west half is sheathed in concrete panels and obscured by metal piping.

#### West Elevation

The west elevation of the building is hidden by Cold Storage Building B.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	7	Page	10	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	itectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

#### Interior

The interior of the building is concrete and filled with machinery.

#### Storage Building (1980) Noncontributing

Photo# 26

#### North Elevation

The Storage Building is a one-story concrete block structure with a flat roof. The north elevation is a solid concrete block wall divided by four concrete pilasters.

#### East Elevation

The east elevation has an overhead sliding metal door in the southern bay and a metal entrance just north of center.

### South Elevation

The south elevation of the building is a solid concrete block wall with four concrete pilasters.

#### West Elevation

The west elevation is a solid concrete wall that is partially hidden by the engine house.

#### Fertilizing Building (1908, 1947) Noncontributing

Photo # 29

#### North Elevation

The fertilizing building is a two-story brick structure with a concrete foundation and a flat roof. The north elevation features a modern metal projection that covers the eastern half of the building. The western half of the elevation has been covered by concrete block. A two-story, red brick boiler house was added to the west end of the building in approximately 1946. This portion of the building connects to the engine room, and is unseen.

#### **East Elevation**

The east elevation has been covered by concrete block. It features a central opening on each level, and the metal wall from the modern addition on the northern end.

#### South Elevation

The south elevation is hidden by a conveyor tunnel and the 1947 Poultry Packing Plant.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	7	Page	11	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	itectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

#### West Elevation

The west elevation features a brick wall with a metal staircase and a metal entrance door on the second level.

#### Interior

The interior of this building has retained the wood floors, trusses, and structural supports (Photo 28). However, the walls have been reinforced with concrete block that has replaced all of the original brick, and therefore the building is considered noncontributing.

### **Guard Station** (c. 1980) Noncontributing

Photo # 26

A small guard hut with a pyramidal roof and windows on all four sides sits at the north side of the alley, near the Egg Drying Building.

<u>Freight Station</u> (1949) Contributing

Photo 29-31

#### North Elevation

On the north end of the lot, facing West Tampa Street, sits the one-story, blonde brick freight station with modern stylistic features. The building is comprised of a storage room and offices. The entrance bay projects, featuring rounded corners, paired eight pane metal windows with two light transoms, and a recessed wood and glass door with a wood awning. Offices with similar doors and windows project from the storage building, on either side of the entrance bay. The storage room portion of the north elevation features three sets of glass block windows with concrete sills on either side of the central projections (Photo 30).

#### East Elevation

The east elevation is a blank brick wall.

#### South Elevation

The south elevation features ten truck dock bays, recessed below a concrete awning. Metal entrance doors are located in the first and eighth bays.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number	7	_ Page	12	Producers Produce Company Plant Greene County, MO
		Historic and Ar	ic and Arc	hitectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri
West Elevation				

The west elevation is a blank brick wall.

#### Interior

The interior of the building retains the open floor plan with concrete floor, metal trusses, and brick walls in the storage room (Photo 31) and the brick walls, wood and glass doors, and tiled floors and ceilings in the offices (Photo 32).

#### Integrity

The Producers Produce Company Plant has changed little since the period of significance. Despite a few, small, modern outbuildings, the plant is virtually the same as it was in 1954, when the last contributing structure was constructed. Though metal panels were added to the east, south, and portions of the north elevations in the 1960s, the removal of the panels has revealed much of the original material and design. It is regrettable that many of the windows have been removed, but the openings have been filled with removable concrete block, and the glazing could be re-installed. Despite this fact, many of the original or historic wood windows are intact and in fairly good condition on the Poultry Storage Building. The surrounding blocks continue to support the industrial activity that filled this area during the period of significance. Though the plant closed in 2008, the building's industrial design remains functional for a meat packing facility.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	8	Page	13	Producers Produce Company Plant
				Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	itectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

#### **Summary**

The Producers Produce Company Plant is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Industry. The farm depression of the 1920s encouraged farmers to ban together in cooperatives to buy supplies in bulk and sell their products for the highest possible price. Producers Produce was the statewide poultry affiliate of the Missouri Farmers Association (MFA) cooperative, started in 1920. The company's initial responsibilities in Springfield were primarily to house live chickens and collect their eggs, and to sell and ship these products through the most lucrative exchange. As time progressed. Producers Produce expanded to dressed poultry and egg separating, as well as acquiring a hatchery and selling groceries to local farmers. The company experienced early success, leading the nation in the value of poultry products marketed cooperatively as early as 1926. In 1943, Producers Produce Company in Springfield sold \$6.4 million of poultry products through exchanges, and became "the most successful and largest plant of its kind in the United States."2 The MFA's influence on the City of Springfield was characterized by the Producers Produce Company and helped make Springfield the "cooperative capital of the United States." The building is representative of the company's endeavors during the period of significance from its opening in 1920 to reorganization of the MFA in 1960. The plant also meets the registration requirements for Industrial/ Warehouse buildings associated with the historic context "Industrial Development in Springfield, MO," as established by the Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri Multiple Properties Document.

### **Elaboration**

### Development of MFA & Cooperatives in Missouri

The agricultural industry saw a dramatic increase after the Civil War, as farmers expanded into the Great Plains. Production of agricultural commodities quickly surpassed the standard demand, and by the end of the century, prices had dropped to less than 5% of the value in 1870. The return on agricultural products soon fell below the production cost. Missourians slipped into a "farm depression" because Missouri was a major agricultural state, with its economy based on corn, cattle, and dairy products. By 1910, Missouri led the nation in poultry production.<sup>4</sup>

2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Raymond Young. <u>Cultivating Cooperation: A History of the Missouri Farmers Association.</u> (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid, 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid, 13.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _	8	Page	14	Producers Produce Company Plant
				Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	itectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

Because they could not control output as well as industrial producers, the farmers began to form organizations that would work in political and social spheres to advocate for farmers rights. In addition, the farms found that buying in bulk and sharing shipping expenses with nearby producers could substantially lower the cost of production.<sup>5</sup>

In 1908, William Hirth began distributing his publication, *Missouri Farmer and Breeder*. The magazine provided helpful advice to farmers, but was also an active voice for farm cooperative organization. The publication became the official organ of many organized agricultural groups in the state by 1914, from farm management, to cattle feeders, corn growers, and dairy associations. A 1914 article called farmers to organize into school district farm clubs. One such group formed north of Brunswick in Chariton County on May 10, 1914, and is considered to be the first cooperative meeting of the Missouri Farmers Association. Together, these farmers ordered 1,500 lbs of baler twine, a deal handled directly through William Hirth, who charged nothing for the transaction. When word spread that the farmers saved nearly \$400 in their first few orders, cooperative farm clubs quickly began to organize across the state.

The first mention of a statewide cooperative occurred in *The Missouri Farmer* on January 15, 1916. By the following year, the first president of the Missouri Farmers Association (MFA) was elected. In 1919, farmers exchanges were established in eleven counties, where MFA members made up more than 75% of the farmer population. These exchanges involved a rented building for storing commodities, and many included machines and supplies that could be universally beneficial to the members.<sup>6</sup>

The MFA expanded into many sectors. The cooperative worked with everything from seed, grain, livestock, poultry, produce, and other agricultural commodities to roofing materials and oil. While farmers could participate in bulk ordering to save on production costs, they also began joining together to sell their products under the MFA name. Solicitation through MFA exchanges ensured buyers that products would be of a certain high quality, resulting in a higher price for the product. In addition, the exchanges saved the farmers the time and money they would have spent finding buyers for their products.

Because the items sold through the MFA were marketed as "high quality" products, standardization of processing developed. At first, the cooperative would purchase machinery used by all the local farmers to prepare their items for shipping and delivery. But as time passed, processing became more substantial, and required more steps

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid, 14-15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid, 141.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _	8	Page	15	Producers Produce Company Plant
				Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Archi	tectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

before the items could be sold. As processing became more intricate and time consuming, the MFA opened specific agricultural processing plants with full time workers. This ensured that the products were always processed the same way, and gave farmers more time in their fields.

Through the cooperative several exchanges and warehouses were established, and multiple divisions were created to handle the accounting, publication, advertising, and other business practices of the cooperative. The 1940s proved to be one of the cooperative's most lucrative decades, posting \$83.5 million in sales in 1943 and saving \$2.35 million for its farmers. After World War II, the cooperative began to lose steam, and by the 1960s the MFA was posting losses in all its major areas. Reorganization at this time began a long hard process of recovery, and resulted in the closing of many unproductive and aging plants over the next two decades.<sup>7</sup>

### Producers Produce Company

The Producers Produce Company was the poultry affiliate of the MFA, and one of the more lucrative branches. The cooperative had seven plants across the state by 1921, all called Producers Produce. By the following year, the number reached its all time high of nine, with locations in Springfield, St. Joseph, Clinton, Sedalia, Chillicothe, Medill, Shelbina, St. James, and Kirksville. In the early years, farmers would bring live chickens to the Producers Produce plants, from which they would be shipped to markets across the country. This was a major advantage to farmers who would have usually sold only in local markets, or perhaps within the state. Producers Produce also began crating the eggs collected from the live chickens during shipping, and sold them in the nationwide markets as well. 8 Within a few years, the company expanded to dressed meat, which required killing and de-feathering the chickens before shipping them. By 1926. Producers Produce lead the nation in the value of poultry products marketed cooperatively, with a total of \$9.5 million from 1,528 cars of eggs and 936 cars of live and dressed poultry. The company was represented by two exchange agents in New York and one in Chicago, which marketed the high quality of a cooperative product and sought the highest price to return to the farmer.<sup>9</sup>

Springfield's Producers Produce Company plant became the largest plant of its kind in the United States. Originally owned by the Farm Club Cold Storage Company, the Springfield plant opened in 1920 with a single, two-story building for its offices and live

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 58-59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid, 141.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid, 74.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	8	Page	16	Producers Produce Company Plant
		_		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	itectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

bird warehouse at 601 (address changed, now 501) North Main Avenue. <sup>10</sup> The plant was established seven blocks northeast of the Public Square. The area was primarily occupied by single family homes on large lots, with small stores at intersections. The design of the Producers Produce plant incorporated loading docks on the south side to take advantage of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad track that ran along West Phelps Street. In addition, the building's main façade featured four large loading doors which allowed street access for truck deliveries.

Demand for poultry products inspired the company to add an egg breaking department in 1927, which separated the "number-one" eggs of highest quality from the dirty and checked eggs. <sup>11</sup> Within five years, the company expanded its factory to accommodate more operations (See Figure 5: Aerial Photo). The 1933 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the plant's five buildings, with special departments for feeding of live chickens, picking of eggs, general storage, and wood crate storage for eggs. <sup>12</sup>

While continuing to ship live poultry until 1935, the plant's attention turned to dressed meat during the 1930s, and a new packing plant was constructed for this purpose in 1935. Known as "New York Dressed," the chickens were killed, de-feathered, and packed in crates for shipment. These chickens found their way to New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia, sent from an internal rail switch within the 1935 building. Toward the end of the decade, eviscerated poultry<sup>13</sup> was in highest demand, and the company accommodated the new trend.

In addition to the poultry plant, the Producers Produce Company began merchandizing groceries to farmers exchanges in the early 1930s. Sold in mass quantities, the items such as hundred pound bags of sugar and case lots of canned goods were distributed to local groups, serving Springfield and the surrounding county. The grocery responsibly was delegated to the newly formed Producers Produce Grocery Division in 1938, and then transferred to a separate entity called the Producers Grocery Company in 1941.<sup>14</sup>

The 1940s brought about an egg revolution at the Springfield plant. A new egg preparing plant was constructed in 1943, where eggs were washed and "light tests" were executed to determine the egg's status as a "number one," "dirty," or "checked"

<sup>12</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company. Springfield, Missouri, Plate 15 including the years 1910, 1933.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The company name was officially changed to Producers Produce in the 1926 city directory, though the Farm Club Cold Storage Company was affiliated with the MFA as early as 1921. The building is still extant at the corner of Phelps and Main.

<sup>&#</sup>x27;' Ibid, 168-69

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The removal of internal organs, primarily in the abdominal area.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Young, 100.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _	8	Page	17	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Archit	ectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

egg. After washing, the eggs were sent to the 1943 drying room, where two large fans circulated air between the crates. The meat division of the factory was also performing well, offering nearly 2 acres of floor space, with a feeding capacity of 50,000 birds, and a killing capacity of 1500 birds an hour in 1943. That same year, the Producers Produce Company of Springfield produced sales of \$6.4 million through exchanges, making it one of the "most successful and largest plants in the United States." At that time, the major MFA agencies across the state brought in approximately \$83.5 million, saving \$2.35 million for members.

Through the 1940s and early 1950s the plant continued to expand. A toy factory was absorbed into the plant and used for fertilizing and drying eggs. A 1949 freight station was constructed at the north end of the property, which eventually made shipment easier after the train service was discontinued. A second poultry packing building was added in 1947 (See figure 6: Sketch), and four years later the company constructed two cold storage buildings for both eggs and poultry. These new buildings were constructed with specific functions, and thus their designs incorporated specialized equipment. The floors of the 1947 packing building are sloped, with metal grate covering wide drains that open to a 12,000 gallon below-ground tank. This design allowed workers to eliminate unwanted parts of the chicken with ease. Likewise, the cold storage buildings were constructed to suit their function. Concrete walls, floors, and ceilings with no windows allowed the buildings to maintain a low temperature, supplemented by "brine" water pipes found on the ceiling.

In the 1960s, the MFA was reorganized, and through the reorganizing of the company, the Producers Produce Company began to lose money. Though the MFA continued to run the plant until 1977, the Springfield operation began to lose business as early as 1959. With the MFA's reorganization came a remodeling of the building, which was primarily concerned with the addition of metal panels to the exterior (removed in 2009) and the remodeling of the interior offices. MFA sold the plant in 1977, and it passed between several meat processing companies until the building was closed in 2008.

#### MFA in Springfield

The Producers Produce Company employed approximately 425 people at its peak in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company. Springfield, Missouri, Plate 15 including the years, 1933 and 1950, and 1957.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Young, 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ibid, 139.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number	8	Page	18	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Archi	tectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

late 1940s. The 1940 census showed 1026 people employed in agricultural manufacturing plants in Springfield at that time, which was nearly 4% of the total population. 19 That means that in 1940 nearly half of those employed in agricultural manufacturing in Springfield worked for Producers Produce. Other notable packing plants in Springfield included the Queen City Packing Plant and the Armour and Company plant. Both of these companies were satellite plants, with headquarters in Chicago and Kansas City, respectively. While both of these plants processed a substantial amount of poultry products, neither plant was as large, nor employed as many of Springfield's citizens as did the Producers Produce plant.

But Producers Produce was important to Springfield not only for the jobs it provided the community, but also for the extensive savings that it offered local farmers. As a cooperative, and a part of the MFA, the Producers Produce Company is representative of a major trend in the City of Springfield in the first half of the twentieth century, and helped make it the "cooperative capital of the United States." 20

In Greene County, the cooperative movement began in February of 1917 when the first group of farmers met to form the Greene County Sale Association. An office was established in Springfield's Convention Hall, with a sales room utilized next door. A commodities warehouse and Frisco Railroad switch facility were constructed under the Association's discretion, and soon the cooperative looked to the MFA for membership.<sup>21</sup> Within three years, the MFA constructed a central produce exchange in Springfield, as well as the Farm Club Mill and Feed Company of Springfield, wholesale feed operation.<sup>22</sup> The MFA opened a bulk oil plant and another mill called the Springfield Mill and Feed Company in 1929, changing the name of the latter to the MFA Mill and Feed within a year. 23 In 1936, the MFA constructed a farm supply warehouse that could easily send products to local farmers.<sup>24</sup>

One the most successful years for Springfield's MFA was 1943. Springfield's Producers Creamery Company had sales of \$8.1 million at the exchange, and Producers Produce showed sales of \$6.4 million. The MFA Milling Company brought in \$9.5 million that year, and other operations within the city included branches of MFA Oil, MFA Hatchery,

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 141.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> United States: National Archives and Records Administration. <u>1940 Federal Population Census</u>: Catalog of National Archives. (Washington, DC: National Archives Trust Fund Board, 2002). <sup>20</sup> Young, 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> The mill & feed company's name was changed to the Missouri Farmers Association Purchasing Department in 1923. Young, 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid, 85.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _	8	Page	19	Producers Produce Company Plant
				Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Archi	tectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

three farmers exchanges, and a branch of the Farmers Livestock Commission Company. The size and efficiency of the MFA operations in the city were examined by the Bank for Cooperatives and the Central Bank for Cooperatives, and the president of the Louisville Bank Cooperative, John Brown, remarked that "never in our experience throughout the country have I seen a more through and sound cooperative than here." The large amount of MFA activity in Springfield, and the success of the city's plants, caused the MFA to hold its annual convention in the city, despite its remote location.

The MFA's strong support in Springfield continued through the 1960s, with a tire warehouse and recapping plant constructed by the company in 1965. The city aided the success of the MFA, and the cooperative connection allowed many of the Greene County farmers to make a profit from their products. As a part of the MFA cooperative, the Producers Produce Company represents this unique relationship and the success of the MFA, as well as executing the productivity and profit of a cooperative in general.

### Producers Produce as an Industrial Building in Springfield

When rail service expanded to Springfield in 1870, manufacturers and processors were able to ship their good to broader markets, and the raw materials in the surrounding area took a lead role in the city's commerce. A second rail service via the Kansas City, Ft. Scott, and Memphis Railway ran just north of the city's downtown, and helped further establish Springfield as an industrial and manufacturing community. By 1906, Springfield boasted 125 factories and 160 jobbing and wholesale firms. When new roads were constructed through Missouri in the 1920s, Springfield found another mode of transportation to ship products across the country. Via Route 66 and other major highways, Springfield was able to attract even more industry and manufacturing to the city. By 1942, approximately 200 manufacturing plants and another 1608 wholesale and distribution businesses were located in the city. <sup>26</sup>

The vast development of industry in Springfield led to the construction of large, functional buildings used as factories, warehouses, and other utilitarian structures. Most of these buildings are found in the early commercial and industrial centers of the community, north of the public square. These buildings were designed for practicality and ease of maintenance, with little to no architectural styling. Most of the examples of this property type in Springfield were constructed of brick, with multiple stories, sometimes found in groups with various forms or designs though functionally related.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ibid, 138-39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Debbie Sheals. <u>Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, MO: Industrial Development in Springfield, 1838-1945.</u> (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2005).

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	8	Page	20	Producers Produce Company Plant
				Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Archi	tectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

The buildings have open floor plans with wood posts and beam systems. The fenestration of these buildings is varied depending on their function and date of construction. Older facilities often feature rows of evenly spaced windows to allow the maximum amount of light to penetrate the interior. Buildings used for storage or as warehouses typically included few windows. When present, the window surrounds were simple, with straight tops. The ground floor of these building typically included loading docks, drive doors, and sometimes commercial storefronts. Walls of these buildings were nearly flat.<sup>27</sup>

These buildings are important to the history of Springfield for their role in the commercial and industrial history of the community. Relying heavily on rail service, and then on motor vehicle transportation, the manufacturing and commercial industries of Springfield played a large role in the city's economy. To be eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places as a Warehouse/ Industrial building c. 1838-1945 the Multiple Property Document Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri, the building must be "the site of a business of particular importance to the community, exemplify a particular building type or use, or be associated with an important even or occurrence." Those eligible under National Register Criterion A must "retain the basic, original form, with no major alterations to principal exterior dimensions or rooflines." Original or early materials must dominate wall surfaces, ornamental features should be retained window openings on the facade should be intact, though replacement is acceptable. Rear additions, and those to secondary elevations are acceptable, and "other additions and alterations which are more than fifty years old may have acquired historic value of their own and can be evaluated for significance." Changes to first level openings are common, and the original material for ground floor fenestration is not requisite as long as the historic architectural patterns are evident. However, the existence of the original storefronts, garage doors, and other distinctive features can outweigh other integrity issues if the building continues to represent the period of significance.<sup>28</sup>

The Producers Produce Company plant meets the requirements for listing as an industrial building under the cover document. The company was essential in providing the highest price for poultry products from local farmers, and is an associated example of how cooperative influence impacted the city and surrounding county, and how Springfield supported the MFA. In addition to the money the packing plant saved the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _	8	Page	21	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	nitectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

local farmers, the Producers Produce Company in Springfield provided 425 jobs within its facility, supporting not only the agriculturalists, but also the local community. The plant continues to represent its original function, and its primary façade is relatively unchanged in construction. Though some window infill has occurred, the original fenestration is evident, and the changes represent the company's revitalization efforts in the 1960s. The basic layout of the plant is relatively unchanged since the period of significance, and the noncontributing structures are unseen from the main elevation. The building retains its association with the poultry packing industry from the period of significance, as well as its function as a cooperative and MFA affiliate.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number	9	Page	22	Producers Produce Company Plant
		-		Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	itectural Resources of Springfield, Missour

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number _	10	Page	23	Producers Produce Company Plant
				Greene County, MO
		Histor	ic and Arch	nitectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The Producers produce Company plant is located Springfield, Greene County, Missouri, occupying the entirety of City Block 408 bounded by West Tampa Street on the north, North Main Avenue on the east, West Phelps Street on the south, and a small alley adjoining North Grant Avenue on the west.

## **Boundary Justification**

The selected boundaries incorporate all of the property historically associated with the Producers Produce Company, including the main plant, outbuildings, and paved lot.

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Information Page \_\_\_\_\_24\_ **Producers Produce Company Plant Greene County, MO** 

Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

### **Photo Log:**

The following is true for all photos- Photographer/Date: Julie LaMouria, October 2009

Producers Produce Company Plant

Greene County, MO

Digital Photos on file with Lafser & Associates

20 North Main Suite 101 Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

### See Figure 7: Exterior Photo Key

7. Exterior Frioto Rey
1920 Poultry Storage East Elevation
1920 Poultry Storage South Elevation
1920 Poultry Storage North Elevation
Poultry Storage Second Level Office
Poultry Storage First Level Storage
1935 Office South Elevation
Plant central alley looking north from W Phelps
1935 Office Building Second Level Office
1935 Office Building First Level Packing Room
1943 Egg Preparation Room East Elevation
1943 Egg Preparation Room North Elevation
1943 Egg Preparation Room Roof Elevation
1943 Egg Preparation Room Interior First Level
1943 Egg Preparation Room Interior Second Level
1943 Egg Drying Plant East Elevation
1943 Egg Drying Plant North & West Elevation
1946 Shipping Addition Interior
1943 Egg Drying Room Interior
1947 Packing Plant South Elevation
1947 Packing Plant Interior First Level
1947 Packing Plant Interior Second Level
Cold Storage A South Elevation
Cold Storage A West Elevation
Cold Storage A Interior
Cold Storage B West Elevation
North Elevation of Plant
Cold Storage B Interior
1908 Fertilizing Building Interior Second Floor
1949 Freight Station North Elevation
1949 Freight Station Interior Storage
1949 Freight Station Interior Office

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Information Page 25 Producers Produce Company Plant
Greene County, MO
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

## **Index to Figures:**

Figure 1: Basement Plant Figure 2: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Plan Figure 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Pan Figure 4: Site Plan Figure 5: Aerial Photo Figure 6: Plant Sketch

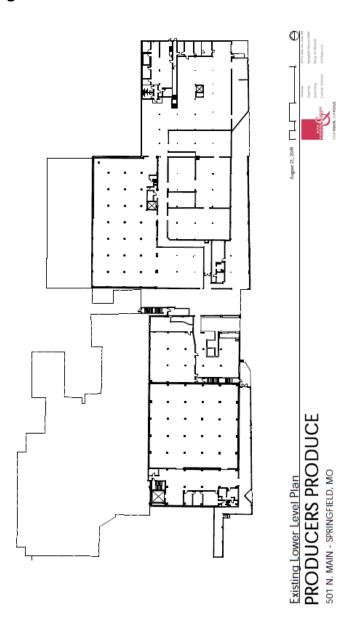
Figure 7: Exterior Photo Key

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Information Page \_\_\_\_\_\_26

Page \_\_\_\_\_26 Producers Produce Company Plant
Greene County, MO
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

Figure 1: Basement First



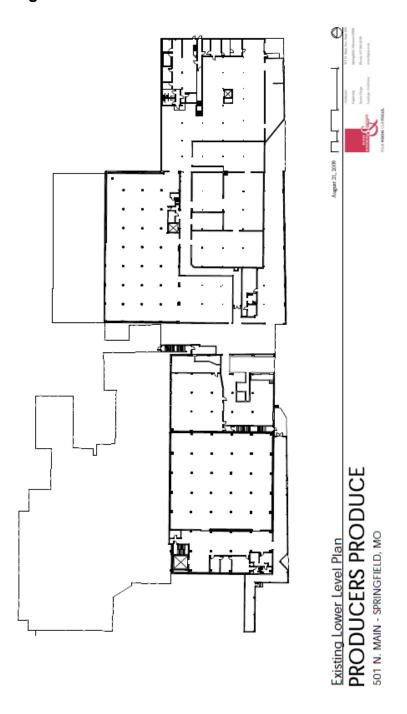
# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Information Page \_\_\_\_\_27

Producers Produce Company Plant Greene County, MO

Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

Figure 2: First Floor



NPS Form 10-900-a

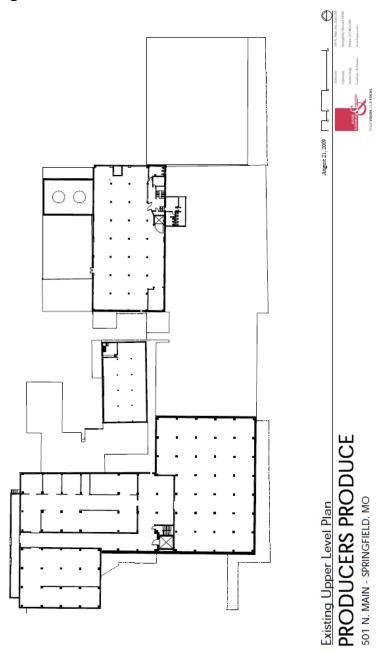
# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Information Page \_\_\_\_\_28

Producers Produce Company Plant Greene County, MO

Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

Figure 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Plan

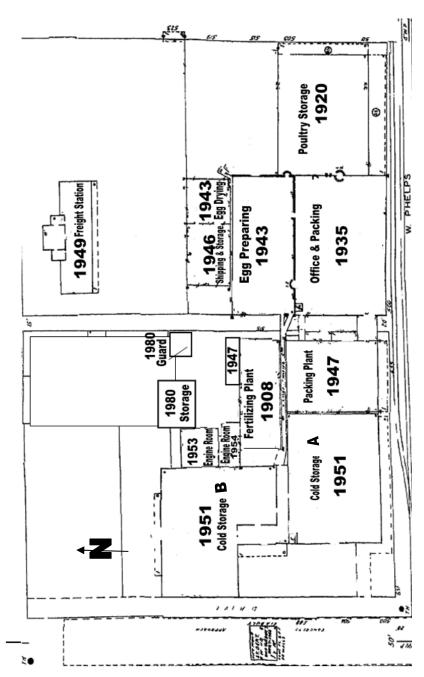


# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Information Page \_\_\_\_\_\_29

rition Page 29 Producers Produce Company Plant
Greene County, MO
Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

Figure 4: Site Plan

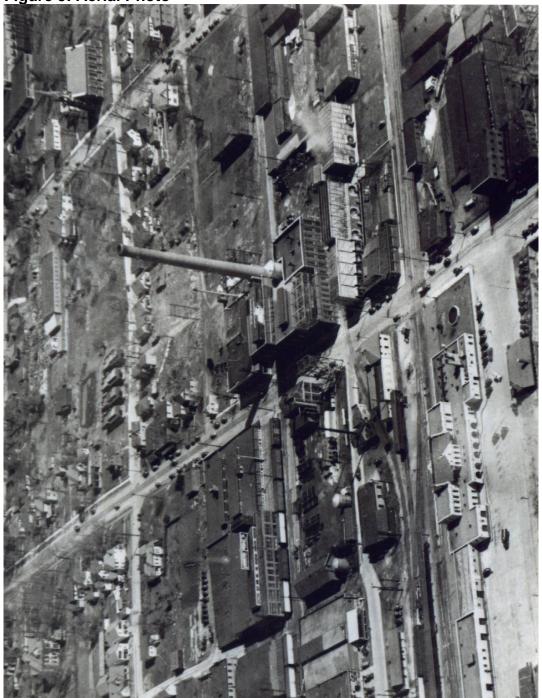


## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Information Page \_\_\_\_\_\_30 Producers Produce Company Plant **Greene County, MO** 

Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

Figure 5: Aerial Photo

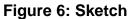


# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Information Page \_\_\_\_\_31 Producers Produce Company Plant

Producers Produce Company Plant
Greene County, MO

Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri





# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Information Page 32 Producers Produce Company Plant Greene County, MO

Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri

Figure 7: Exterior Photo Key

