Three of the six companies were indicted for conspiring to fix sugar prices in California, Arizona, and Las Vegas and Reno, Nev. Five of the six firms were charged with a separate price-fixing conspiracy in other Western and Midwestern states. In a third civil suit, two companies — including one indicted firm and a seventh sugar company — were accused of conspiring to restrain competition in five Western states. The government said they had agreed not to market sugar under grocery chain house brands, which usually are sold at cheaper prices.

The six companies named as defendants in the indictments are: Great Western Sugar Co., Denver; American Crystal Sugar Co., formerly of Denver; Hollywood Sugar Corp., Colorado Springs, Colo.; California and Hawaiian Sugar Co., San Francisco; Amalgamated Sugar Co., Ogden, Utah; and Consolidated Foods Corp. of Chicago.

American Crystal was dissolved in 1973 and was succeeded by a cooperative association based in Fargo, N.D., which goes by the same name.

J.C. Tanner, president of American Crystal, said that the cooperative and its predecessor "have conducted their affairs in full compliance with the antitrust laws." He refused further comment until officials of American Crystal studied the indictment.

Spokesmen for Amalgamated Sugar, California and Hawaiian, Hollywood Sugar and Great Western said they would withhold comment until they had seen the indictment. The markets involved include California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin, part of Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

Are the six companies under indictment each faces a maximum penalty, if found guilty, of a fine of $50,000.

American Crystal Sugar made $19 million last year

American Crystal Sugar Co., Moorhead, Minn., reported net income of $19,227,266 for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, which date marked its first full year as a grower-owned cooperative.

In fiscal 1973, American Crystal lost $221,000. The annual report said the net loss was incurred as the result of the merger of a beet growers association into American Crystal and the subsequent conversion of the publicly held firm into a cooperative. This resulted in the total refinancing of the business and the recording of some non-recurring adjustments. Yearly earnings should be directly comparable from now on, the report said.

The sugar company reported net revenues of $172,886,239 for fiscal 1974, up 43 percent from $120,604,267 the previous year, due primarily to higher selling prices for sugar, dried pulp and molasses.

In fiscal 1974, member-patronage earnings or Red River Valley grower-stockholders totaled $14,667,367 and earnings from non-patronage business operations totaled $4,559,880. Non-patronage business included operations of sugar plants at Clarkfield, Calif., and Rocky Ford, Colo., and interest income.

The increased 1974 operating income was achieved mainly through higher selling prices, which more than offset the effects of lower sugar shipments and higher beet, labor, freight, and operating supply costs.

Average payments for Red River Valley 1973 crop sugar beets were $25.81 a ton, compared with $16.24 a ton for the 1972 crop.

The annual report said that in February 1974, the company embarked on a three-year plant-expansion and modernization program that will significantly increase the slicing capacity in the Red River Valley, mainly through construction of a new 4,500-ton-per-day beet facility in East Grand Forks. The new plant is expected to be in operation by late 1975.

Approximately $50 million in additional capital expenditures are called for through 1976.