

TESTING BUTTER FOR MOISTURE AND SALT

Some 110,164 churnings of butter were tested for moisture at grading-stores, and only 0.30 per cent. were found to exceed the legal limit of 16 per cent. allowed by the Dairy Industry Act, and were returned to the companies for reworking to bring them within the legal requirement.

Of the 107,087 samples tested for salt, only 0.25 per cent. failed to comply with the regulations.

WHEY BUTTER

Gradings of whey butter increased slightly from 2,274 tons in 1942-43 to 2,343 tons in 1943-44. Some 91.88 per cent. was classified as first grade, compared with 92.74 per cent. for the preceding financial year. Whey butter is again being shipped to England, and the better qualities used to assist in maintaining the ration of 2 oz. per week.

CHEESE

Cheese quality has been well maintained, except for some falling off during the dry weather. No great difficulty has been experienced with starter failures.

During the season a method of air filtration attached to the starter cans was devised by Mr. C. S. Martin, Dairy Instructor, Hamilton, which promises to be a simple and efficient method of preventing starter failures.

The lack of temperature control in cheese-curing rooms has been much in evidence during the present season, owing to the long-continued spell of hot weather, and much cheese has deteriorated in quality through storage in cheese-factory curing-rooms at excessively high temperatures. This matter is worthy of serious consideration by dairy companies. The shortage of suitable labour in cheese-factories has been fairly acute, thereby throwing a heavy load on the comparatively few experienced men available.

The average grade of cheese graded for export during the year was 92.064 points, as compared with 92.032 points for the year ended 31st March, 1943. Of the 85,100 tons received for grading, 18,242 tons, or 21.43 per cent., was graded as finest grade, 63,158 tons, or 74.21 per cent., as first grade, and 3,700 tons, or 4.35 per cent., as below first grade. The comparative percentages for 1942-43 were 18.69, 77.33, and 3.97, so that there was an increase of 2.74 per cent. in the finest class.

BUTTER-BOXES

There has been difficulty, owing to conditions arising from the war, in maintaining supplies of suitable wooden butter-boxes, and to meet the position more than 2,000,000 Fiberite boxes were imported. Most of these came from the United States, though some were imported from Canada. In addition, the Whakatane Paper-mills imported a supply of pulp from which they manufactured a quantity of fibre-board. Reports from England have, in the main, been favourable, despite unavoidable delays in transit and severe handling under present conditions.

FARM DAIRY INSTRUCTION

The necessity to conserve petrol-supplies, and the absence of several officers on military leave and of others because of sickness, have placed some restriction on the farm dairy instruction service. By the use of other means of transport where possible, however, and with the assistance of neighbouring officers in the case of absentees, although some districts are too large for the most satisfactory working, this work has been carried on with a minimum of dislocation and actually shows an increase in the number of visits.

The number of new milking-sheds erected during the year was 547, while the number substantially reconstructed was 735.

CHECK TESTING OF MILK AND CREAM SAMPLES

Dairy Instructors and Special Inspectors checked the factory testing during 655 visits, and during these visits checked 4,345 samples.

CREAM GRADING

Most factories have come a little closer to official standards during the year, and this has brought some criticism from suppliers, more particularly in the Auckland Province. One result was the holding of a number of meetings, mostly sponsored by dairy companies, at which Mr. W. G. Batt, Special Inspector, Hamilton, addressed suppliers. Attendance totalled approximately 1,000 dairy-farmers. The strict grading standard and more vigorous inspection by Farm-dairy Instructors, combined with the talks and demonstrations given by Mr. Batt, have brought about marked improvement in the quality of cream supplied to some dairy factories in the Auckland Provincial District. The co-operation of the dairy companies has been a gratifying factor.

MILKING-MACHINES

A total of 2,781 applications for permits for milking-machines or parts of milking-machines were received, and 1,954 issued. Of these, 1,483 permits were for complete plants, including new and used, and the balance of 471 for parts of milking-machines.

MILKING MACHINERY CONTROL ORDER 1942

This Order was revoked on the 4th April, 1944. The 1942 Order, which was administered by the Dairy Division, required dairy-farmers to obtain permits from authorized officers of the Division for the purchase of milking-machines, parts, and rubberware, the object being to conserve the limited stocks available. While the Order achieved a great deal by way of economy and toward putting the distribution of parts on a sound basis, the detailed administration required very considerable time and work, and many difficult problems of a minor nature arose. While, however, the Order of 1942 has been revoked, control continues inasmuch as the Factory Controller rations milking-machine manufacturers on the basis of their average normal sales.