

This serves to confirm the Commission's general findings concerning the unreliable and unsatisfactory nature of accommodation supplies of milk.

Summary of Results

To summarize, the outstanding facts in the present situation are—that the milk supplied to schools has been cut out or reduced on two occasions; that during the present year supplies to the Armed Forces have been drastically curtailed; that heavy cuts have been made in wholesale supplies and in supplies to households; and that recourse has been had in four during the last six years to suppliers to factories in outside districts. There have been conditions that, judged by ordinary peacetime standards, are abnormal. But, apart from the unusually prolonged dry spell, these unusual conditions may be expected to continue and a dry autumn must always be anticipated. In Part III of this report we make recommendations that, if adopted, may to some extent relieve the position so far as the influence of the demand for the Armed Forces are concerned. In Part II we make other recommendations that we hope will assist in other matters. But it is plain that the position in the Auckland area is a grave one. Apart from other matters, the cutting-down of school supplies must be regarded as a serious step. This service is a part of the policy of the country and, moreover, family budgets—especially those of the lower-paid wage groups—are adjusted because of it. And dependence in any degree upon outside factory supplies disregards the policy that has developed of safeguarding the liquid-milk supplies to towns, a policy that, according to the evidence of health authorities, ought to advance to higher standards than any hitherto attained.

Balancing-station

At present the factory owned and operated by the New Zealand Co-operative Dairy Co. acts as a balancing-station for the area. The several vending companies are members of the association and send their surplus milk to the factory and receive factory prices for it. This method of dealing with surplus may be contrasted with one in which supplies to one depot could be treated as a means of balancing the total supply by directing what was required into the vending-houses and using the one surplus for manufacturing purposes and under which a proportionate part of the surplus could be charged against every individual supplier to the area.

Methods of Production

The cows milked in the Auckland area include a number of Friesians, Shorthorns, Ayrshires, and Jersey crossbreds.

The method of replacing stock varies. It is recognized on all hands that the purchase of replacements at saleyards is a dangerous practice, yet the practice is widespread. Some farmers purchase from other herds with which they are familiar, and buying and selling is the business of a number of experienced agents. Some farmers breed their own replacements. It is noticeable in this as in other areas that the best results are obtained by farmers who do breed their own replacements.

The production of winter feed on the farm is not so extensive as it is in Christchurch, though considerable quantities of hay and ensilage are produced. Brewers' grains are in use and concentrates are purchased as available.

Farm Dairies

The majority of the farm dairies that we visited in this area may be described as fair in layout, buildings, and equipment. There are some dairies that may be regarded as quite satisfactory. Some that were built many years ago must have been good in their day. Many leave much to be desired. The Inspectors of the Department of Agriculture are maintaining pressure to secure improvement, but the results have been checked by the lack of material and shortage of labour. The favourable condition of most of the soil to the south of Auckland and in some parts to the north, together with the mild climate, suggest that the farm dairies in this area should be equal to the best in the Dominion.

The temperature during the summer months in Auckland make the cooling arrangements on the farm a matter of first moment. The atmosphere is often humid and the water-supply is often not cold enough to bring the milk down to a sufficiently low temperature. Some farms have refrigerators, and the position will not be satisfactory until such refrigerators are regarded as an essential feature of every farm dairy in the area.

Quality of Supply

The type of cattle in most general use in the area is reflected in the content of the milk. According to tests made by the Health Department the butterfat content averages 4.31 per cent. Though not so high as the average in Wellington, this is higher than the average in Christchurch or Dunedin.

Samples taken of the milk as it comes into the treating-houses are tested by the Health Department and the Milk Council, and these give an indication of the quality and cleanliness of the milk supplied by the dairy-farmers associated with these houses. Samples of raw milk taken from raw-milk vendors and producer-vendors and similarly tested indicate the standard of the milk they distribute. The sampling and testing of milk drawn in the period of shortage from outside sources is mentioned later under the heading of "Treatment."

The following particulars are illustrative and suggestive:

Source.	Number of Samples.	Percentage not complying with Sale of Food and Drugs Act.
Milk delivered to treating-houses	1,305	7.28
Milk distributed raw by vendors	124	4.03
Milk distributed raw by producer-vendors	403	14.39

Prices

For the purpose of fixing producers' prices the year is divided into two periods of six months each, and a winter price and a summer price are paid. The seasons and prices are as follows:—

Summer—September to February	10½d.
Winter—March to August	14½d.