

## CHEESE

The quality of cheese has been well maintained, weather conditions assisting uniformity of manufacture. Starter trouble was less prevalent than in previous seasons. Although no protracted spells of warm weather were experienced, difficulty was on occasions observed through high curing-room temperatures. The matter of temperature control in cheese-curing rooms is well worthy of consideration by all cheese-manufacturing companies. Where curing-room temperatures are not controlled, factory managers naturally endeavour to manufacture cheese to suit prevailing conditions. Sudden changes in the weather are, however, liable to upset all efforts in this direction. It is evident, therefore, that greater uniformity in cheese quality would be obtained if all cheese-curing rooms were fitted with temperature and humidity control.

Although the shortage of labour in cheese-factories has not been so acute as during the previous season, the class of labour available is in many cases not satisfactory. This is indicated by the fact that a fair amount of badly finished cheese was forwarded to grading stores, the defect being particularly in evidence in the South Taranaki district.

The average grade of cheese graded for export during the year was 92.121 points, as compared with 92.064 points for the preceding year. Of the 94,140 tons received for grading, 24,421 tons, or 25.94 per cent., was graded as finest grade, 65,633 tons, or 69.71 per cent., as first grade, and 4,086 tons, or 4.34 per cent., as under first grade. The comparative percentages for 1943-44 were 21.43, 74.21, and 4.35, so that there was an increase of 4.51 per cent. in the finest class.

## BUTTER CONTAINERS

While there has been no material increase in the number of containers, other than wooden boxes, used in connection with the export of butter, the position with regard to fibre containers of various origins has been somewhat consolidated, and a further year's experience with this type of container will prove of material assistance in determining future policy with regard to the packaging of butter. Experience in New Zealand and the reports from the London Office of the Dairy Division indicate that the fibre container has definite possibilities. When trading conditions in the United Kingdom assume a more normal aspect, the reaction to this type of container of those trading in our produce will be an important factor. During the war in Europe the abnormal handling and transport conditions have enabled much useful information to be obtained regarding the ability of the fibre container to withstand usage. In the main, this package has shown a satisfactory out-turn. With timber supplies for butter-boxes becoming increasingly inaccessible, attention must continue to be focused on an alternative type of container for our export butter. Rimu timber has not proved a really satisfactory substitute for white-pine.

## GRADING IN HAWKE'S BAY

Owing to the closing-down of Messrs. J. J. Niven and Co., Ltd., Port Ahuriri, the grading of dairy-produce has since August, 1944, been transferred to the freezing-works premises of Messrs. Nelsons (N.Z.), Ltd., Tomoana. The conditions at this place are very suitable for the storage and handling of dairy-produce. Permission to use these premises as a grading store has been limited to the factories which previously shipped their produce through the gazetted premises of Messrs. Niven and Co. It should be recorded that Messrs. Niven and Co. co-operated most efficiently since their premises were first gazetted as a grading store.

## FARM DAIRY INSTRUCTION

The numerical strength of the Farm Dairy Instruction Section of the Division has been built up a little nearer to the pre-war standard with new appointments and the return to duty of several officers serving with the Armed Forces. There are now 76 officers engaged on this work. Petrol restrictions have, however, made it necessary to continue to restrict the service to farmers to a point lower than would be desired. Instructors have given a good deal of assistance, apart from the inspection side of their duties, by giving advice and practical aid to farmers in connection with the planning and construction of milking sheds. The aspect of instruction as distinct from that of pure inspection is an important factor in the general acceptance by the dairy-farmer of farm dairy instruction and the good will existing generally.

The number of new milking sheds erected during the year was 777, while the number substantially reconstructed was 874.

With the object of checking up the work being done by the various Farm Dairy Instructors from the point of view of ensuring a Dominion-wide uniformity of classification standards in respect of the condition of milking sheds and machines, Mr. W. G. Batt, Special Inspector, recently visited most of the principal dairying districts throughout both Islands. During these visits Mr. Batt, accompanied by the local Farm Dairy Instructor and also the Supervising Dairy Instructor for the district, made inspections of a representative selection of sheds and plants.

## MILKING-MACHINES AND SEPARATORS

During the year 1,028 new and 1,002 used milking-machines, making a total of 2,030 machines, were installed. In addition, 123 permits were issued for the installation of separators.