

*Grade Points and Grade Classification of Cheese graded for Export*

Year ended 31st March,		Total Graded.	Average Grade.	Finest Grade.	First Grade.	Under First.
		Tons.		Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.
1948	.. ..	85,274	92·182	28·35	67·69	3·95
1947	.. ..	86,624	92·257	33·84	62·66	3·49
1946	.. ..	90,523	92·114	25·33	69·84	4·82
1945	.. ..	94,140	92·121	25·94	69·71	4·34
1944	.. ..	85,100	92·064	21·43	74·21	4·35
1943	.. ..	109,955	92·032	18·69	77·33	3·97
1942	.. ..	148,331	91·839	21·11	71·00	7·88
1941	.. ..	114,355	92·048	20·43	74·77	4·79
1940	.. ..	86,486	92·065	17·06	79·32	3·61
1939	.. ..	84,236	92·133	17·41	79·64	2·94

*Grading Standards.*—The standard and uniformity of grading is mainly on sound lines and generally the Graders are carrying out their duties capably and conscientiously. Some variations do exist and are to be expected, because district conditions and characteristics in the quality of butter and cheese influence the judgment of the Graders to some extent. That applies more particularly to the smaller ports, where there is very little produce for comparison. It is more in border-line quality that the standard of some officers varies, but good-quality butter and cheese are recognized and pointed accordingly at all ports.

There is very little room for criticism in the methods used for the plugging and sampling of butter and cheese. This has been stressed to all concerned, and it is appreciated that uniformity is desired. All ports have now been supplied with suitable boxes and trays for cheese samples, and there is no excuse for lack of uniformity in this respect.

*Quality.*—The quality of butter and cheese has been satisfactory; over-all, butter shows improvement and cheese a slight falling off in the quantity graded in the Finest and premium classes. Mechanical and split openness have been more in evidence than last season, and at different times the body of the cheese generally has been at fault.

The early spring months were very favourable for butter quality, more particularly in the Auckland and Wellington districts, and at both ports butter reached the Finest standard and premium quality earlier than usual. No doubt the mild winter and the favourable weather in the spring were responsible to some extent for this improvement. One noticeable and pleasing feature has been the absence of feed flavours, particularly that of cress, which appeared to be spreading to more districts during the past year or so. Generally, colour troubles have also been less in evidence and the body of the butter firmer in character. Some factories were at least three weeks ahead in forwarding butter classed Finest and premium, and, with the exception of some brands from the north of Auckland, this improvement was general at the two ports mentioned. Though the quality of the north Taranaki butters did not show this early tendency to Finest and premium quality, the butter at New Plymouth has been generally satisfactory and the grading much on a par with previous years. Some brands of butter seen in the South Island were of choice quality, but others were less pleasing.

There is a general endeavour on the part of the majority of directors and managers to maintain and improve quality. Though in some cases there is still a tendency to commercialize the method of manufacture, it is considered that as a result of discussions at conferences and meetings more attention is being paid to the incorporation of salt by managers, and in consequence the butter generally has not been as harsh as in the previous season.