

The quality of the whey butter, with the exception of the majority of that received at Auckland, has been on a par with that of last season. In the case of Auckland, some slight improvement has been made in some brands because the cream is now dealt with at factories more central to a larger number of cheese-factories, thereby saving the long transport necessary in the past. However, delay in treating and manufacture into butter is still a factor detrimental to this product, and no doubt best results are obtained where the cream can be treated and made up without being held for long periods.

The quality of cheese, while of a good commercial standard, will not show the percentage of Finest which obtained at some of the ports last year.

The quality of Wellington spring cheese was perhaps better than at some of the other ports, but, with the hot and dry conditions which followed, many factories dropped from Finest to First Grade.

Some of the cheese seen in the early part of the season was disappointing. That applied more particularly to north Taranaki, where the body of the cheese coming forward was doughy and lacked acidity. However, the defect was remedied as the season advanced and some good-quality cheese was produced in both north and south Taranaki.

The cheese in the Waikato has been of more uniform quality this season, some of the factories showing good improvement in this respect. One satisfactory feature has been a tendency to more uniform lines from this district, fewer odd vats of poorer quality being in evidence.

The Superintendent of Grading's one visit at the end of November and December was insufficient for the purpose of commenting on the quality of South Island cheese over the season. He was disappointed with the cheese seen at Lyttelton, the main defect being tough bodies and mechanical openness. The cheese at the Bluff were also on the firm side, but much closer in texture. The cheese examined at Timaru and Dunedin were more pleasing and better-quality spring make in body, but in the main too open for Finest.

*Examination of Stored Butter.*—Stored butter which had been held at the Wellington grading-stores for about three months was examined and, with the exception of one brand, the butter had held up satisfactorily, the regrading points being in line with the class in which the butter was placed originally. Results of similar examinations at other ports indicated that, in the main, the original grading was on sound lines.

*Analytical Work.*—This work is of major importance and the need for careful and accurate testing is recognized by all concerned. When necessary, irregularities have been discussed with the officer in charge with a view to all ports being on uniform lines.

An improvement in the proper emulsification of samples for the final test of all samples of butter found to contain water above the legal limit has been noted, and, apart from the fact that some of the smaller ports are not equipped with the electric motor and bit for mixing purposes, the work of testing all butter samples is similar at all ports.

The testing-rooms and appliances generally have always been found in a neat condition, and the responsible officers are to be complimented for maintaining these conditions.

*Finish and Packing of Butter and Cheese.*—Though in some cases the finish and appearance of both butter and cheese could have been better, the outturn of produce has, in the main, been maintained. Graders generally watch the position closely, and offending factories are penalized in grade until the defect is remedied.

Though the finish of the bulk of the cheese has been satisfactory in the main, some bad cases of cracked rinds, defective crowns and lips, and poor finish were seen at Auckland during the season. Apart from these cases, which were mainly concerned with cheese below First Grade quality, this trouble has not been worse than in previous years, and in some districts the improvement which occurred last season has continued.