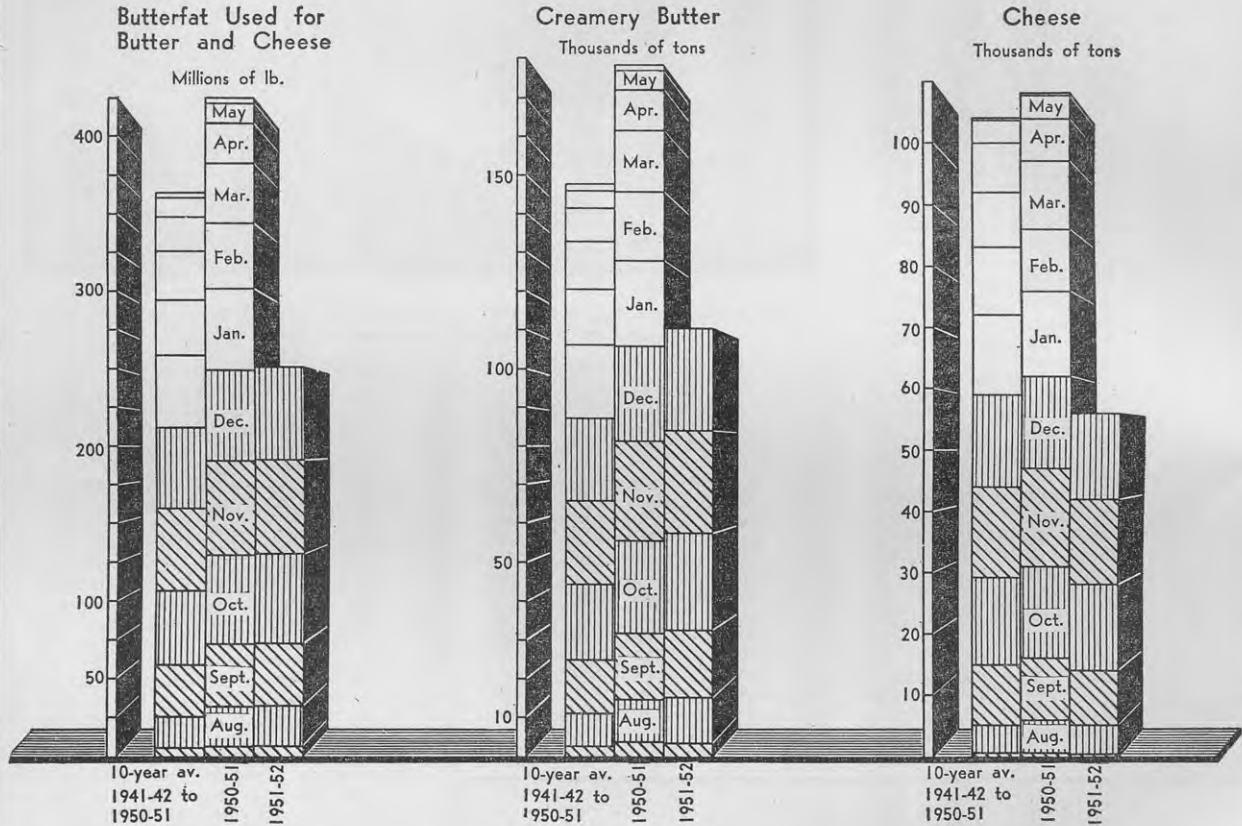


Butterfat Production for 1951-52 Expected to be a Record

THE amount of butterfat produced in the 1951-52 season is likely to exceed 500,000,000lb. "at the pail", breaking last season's record of 499,000,000lb. The diagram below, which is based on data supplied by the Statistical Section, Extension Division, Department of Agriculture, Wellington, shows that production in the first 6 months of the season has exceeded that of the equivalent periods of both the 10-year average and last season for butterfat received at factories for the production of butter and cheese and also for butter manufactured.



The increase amounts to more than 1 per cent. on last year's figures and about 19 per cent. on those of the 10-year average for butterfat received at factories and used for butter and cheese manufacture. Compared with last season's output, butter production is up by 4.4 per cent. for the 6 months, but cheese production is more than proportionally down, the decrease recorded amounting to more than 10 per cent.

This is partly the result of a slight seasonal drop in production in some of the cheese-producing districts, but has mainly been caused by a change-over from cheese to casein production. Cream from whole-milk supplied to casein-producing factories is diverted to butter manufacture, but as relatively less butter than cheese is produced from this diversion and as the butter industry is larger than the cheese industry, the percentage decrease in cheese shows as a larger proportion than the gain to butter.

The best indication of farm production is the amount of butterfat processed by factories. About 85 per cent. of butterfat produced "at the pail" is used by butter and cheese factories. Factory intake of butterfat for each of the first 6 months of this season has exceeded the monthly totals in the same period of last season except for July and November,

when the figures were slightly lower. The net increase for the 6 months is 2,600,000lb. The figure for December 1951 (60,800,000lb.) was slightly higher than that for November 1951 and more than 2,000,000lb. higher than that for December 1950.

Although official figures for 1951 are not yet available, it is estimated that the number of cows in milk is still increasing. This, combined with a generally favourable growing season, more particularly during the summer, has contributed to the large production so far recorded.

Rainfall in January was well maintained and figures at present available indicate that the gains recorded up to December will be increased further. Normal dry conditions prevailed in February, but there have been no serious dry spells in any districts. With the bulk of the season's production in hand the present increases should be maintained if no exceptional conditions are experienced late in the season.

The increasing population of the Dominion is absorbing a larger volume of liquid-milk products, which are the second largest item in butterfat utilisation. Returns from processed-milk factories also show a slight increase in butterfat utilisation for whole-milk powders, condensed and evaporated milks, and allied products.