

With the exception of some of the factories in Canterbury and Otago where mixed strain starters are in use, single-strain starters are used at practically all the cheese-factories throughout the Dominion, being run mainly on the rotational system. Some managers have sufficient confidence in this system to run single-strain starters alone, but in most cases two single-strain starters are used together in the vats.

In South Taranaki Mr. L. J. F. Jones, the Cheese Instructor for that district, has been experimenting with an apparatus for the protection of the cultures and bulk starter milk from contamination by phage. This equipment has been installed for some months at a number of factories in South Taranaki and preliminary experience has yielded satisfactory results. At the same time, it is worthy of note that comparatively little trouble has been experienced this season with any recommended system, especially since the spring.

Quite a few curing-rooms throughout the Dominion are equipped with temperature and humidity control, and this is no doubt the ideal method for curing cheese, provided the cheese and shelves are given the necessary attention.

Although the shortage of labour in cheese-factories was not so acute as in previous seasons, the class of labour offering has, in many instances, not been satisfactory. This was indicated by the way the work was carried out in a number of factories, and it seemed evident that many of the men employed were not interested in their work. Although hours and wages are very much better than they were a few years ago, accommodation and living conditions will have to be made more attractive before the right class of young man will be induced to take up cheese-factory work as a career. The finish of some of the cheese, particularly in South Taranaki, was far from satisfactory, and in most cases could be attributed to the unsuitable labour which had to be employed.

SPECIAL PROJECT: CHESHIRE-TYPE CHEESE

During the year a suggestion which originated with the London Manager of the Marketing Department and was supported by the Dairy Division's London office was received from the Marketing Department (Export Division) to the effect that, owing to the possible continued reduction in the manufacture of Cheshire cheese in Britain, New Zealand should endeavour to manufacture cheese of this type for marketing in the areas in England where Cheshire cheese is in greatest demand. It was thought also that the diversification of type would in future years assist in creating a wider demand for cheese, especially when the existing condition of shortages no longer obtained.

The Dairy Research Institute at Palmerston North and the Dalefield Dairy Co. have co-operated fully in an endeavour to develop a cheese of Cheshire type, and a number of experimental consignments have already been forwarded to Britain. Results so far obtained, while not entirely unsatisfactory, indicate that further trials are necessary in order to develop the correct technique, as applied to New Zealand milk, to give a type of cheese which will satisfy the requirements of this particular trade.

Arrangements are being made accordingly to continue this work during the 1946-47 dairy season.

DAIRY-PRODUCE GRADING

The following extracts from the report of Mr. E. C. Wood, Superintendent of Dairy-produce Grading, provide a useful overall picture of this branch of the Division's work :—

Cheese.—At the various ports, other than Auckland, the quality of cheese inspected was generally of a uniform nature, bodies and flavour being satisfactory, and the main task of the Graders was to decide whether the texture was sufficiently close to allow of the cheese being classed as finest grade.

The Graders were using sound judgment, and a comparison of the grade points allotted during my presence with those previously given for similar quality further indicated that the Graders were working on the right lines. The lower fat content of Southland cheese creates a slight difference in cheese body compared with the higher-testing milk in the North Island, but, nevertheless, the uniformity of the bodies seen at Bluff was very creditable to the cheesemakers and the Dairy Instructor.