

The 3d. per dozen subsidy, which is, in effect, a neutralization of marketing costs, has been continued during the period under review, but there has been no further increase in the intake of eggs through egg floors on account of the subsidy. Although figures are not available, it seems that more eggs are being purchased at present direct by consumers from poultry-farmers than during the whole war period. The lifting of the "Sales of Eggs" Notice, in which the consumer purchases on the farm were restricted to one dozen per family in any one week, has given both producers and consumers an opportunity to sell and purchase in greater quantities. This can be classified as an unofficial distribution, and is a factor when considering the official distribution in any particular marketing area. It is still very difficult to assess the true position in regard to supply and demand owing to high spending-power and absence of alternative food commodities. It is a fact, however, that the demand for eggs has lessened a little during the past few months, and this would probably be due to the tightening-up of luxury spending, and the reappearance of some of the pre-war commodities such as Marmite, and certain lines of tinned foods.

There is no question, however, but that the maintenance of the marketing subsidy has assisted in spreading the total quantity of eggs available over a wider area. Reports indicate that whereas previously eggs were plentiful in country areas, while city consumers had been forced to go without, this is now not so. In previous years the authorization of the 3d. per dozen subsidy was subject to the conditions that for one week during the flush production period the subsidy would be withheld and that such saving was to be used for extending the poultry veterinary and instructional services. This year, however, this condition does not apply, and producers will thus gain directly to this extent.

CHILLING

As indicated in the previous report, the Division is continuing its programme in respect to taking off the market quantities of eggs during the flush production period and making them available as chilled eggs during the winter months. Every endeavour will be made this year to place as many eggs as possible into cool store, but with the necessity of procuring as many eggs as possible for direct consumer use during the flush season and with the drop in egg yield per bird due to the feed situation it may be that this year's programme will be less than in previous years. Irrespective of this eventuality, however, the Division will continue to gain experience by each year's chilled-egg programme and will endeavour in future years to extend this side of its activities. Owing to egg-production being of a seasonal nature, this method is the only satisfactory way of spreading the total production over the full twelve months of the year. In some quarters, consumers are suspicious of chilled eggs, but the Division is confident that by placing a good-quality commodity on the market prejudices will eventually be removed and that the buying public will, with confidence, purchase chilled eggs in the winter months to supplement the fresh-egg supplies that are available at that time.

One of the major difficulties that must be overcome in regard to any future large-scale chilling programme is the fact that adequate cool-store space is not available in the areas of large production. The quantity chilled last year and the target aimed at for the current season are as follow :—

					1945-46. Dozen.	1946-47. Dozen.
Auckland ..	..	..	..	..	125,060	136,900
Wanganui ..	..	..	..	..	49,230	49,000
Wellington ..	..	..	..	..	32,400	33,800
Christchurch ..	..	..	..	..	47,250	60,000
Totals ..	..	..	..	..	253,940	279,700