

DAIRY DIVISION

REPORT OF H. A. FOY, DIRECTOR

THE SEASON

The past year, no doubt, will be remembered by many people as one of the driest in the history of the Dominion, but dairying was not prejudiced to any great extent, because most of the main dairying districts were less affected than other areas. Nevertheless, though the opening of the season promised a record output, expectations were not fulfilled because of the early advent of dry conditions. Even so, production for the year ended 31st March, 1948, showed an increase of about 8 per cent. on a butterfat basis over production for the preceding year. It is also expected that the season will end at the 31st July with a small increase on last season.

North Auckland had a particularly favourable season climatically. In the Waikato, spring conditions were excellent, but some comparatively long dry periods were experienced during the summer and autumn, some areas being more affected than others. Taranaki was also favoured with excellent spring conditions, but dry weather, particularly in coastal areas, resulted in a sharp decline in production from the summer months onward, though beneficial autumn rains revived production somewhat. The Manawatu and the Wairarapa were less favoured, the weather being particularly dry from the peak months onward.

With the exception of Canterbury, where conditions were somewhat similar to those in the Wairarapa and Manawatu, the South Island experienced a season more or less normal in climate.

Abnormal weather caused an early decrease in production by herds supplying liquid milk to such centres as Wellington, Palmerston North, and Auckland, with the result that supplies had to be augmented at the expense of normal butter and cheese production. In the Manawatu, particularly, emergency supplies had to be drawn from areas much farther afield than is customary in a normal autumn. Some of the milk for Wellington City had to be drawn from the Wairarapa and north of Palmerston North.

EXPORT VALUES

The total value, for Customs purposes, of all dairy-produce exported during the year ended 31st December, 1947, was £42,535,093, an increase of £12,920,237 over the 1946 valuation of £29,614,856. The products included in this trade are butter, cheese, casein, dried milk, sugar of milk, and condensed milk and cream. Butter accounted for £28,835,878 and cheese £11,621,068, the values for the previous calendar year being £19,841,455 and £8,448,321.

The quantities represented in those valuations are actual shipments and therefore should not be related to the grading statistics included in this report.