

CASEIN.

Casein graded during the year totalled 2,141 tons, as compared with 1,933 tons for the previous year, an increase of 208 tons. New Zealand casein is in keen demand on account of its uniformly high quality, and finds a ready market overseas. Grading is not compulsory, and as from February of this year the company shipping through New Plymouth ceased the grading of their output, and Auckland and Wanganui are at present the only ports at which the grading is carried out. In addition, a considerable quantity is shipped at Auckland ungraded. The total exports for the year amount to 3,404 tons, valued at £163,235.

EXPORT VALUES.

Prices for dairy-produce, it is pleasing to state, have been on a higher level than for the previous year, although these have been offset by a lesser tonnage for exports totalling 1,741 tons butter and 15,610 tons cheese. Taking the Customs figures as a basis of export values, including butter, cheese, casein, dried milk, condensed milk and cream, and milk sugar, there is an increase of £2,503,558, the total values for the two years being £18,645,718 and £16,142,160 respectively.

TESTING BUTTER FOR MOISTURE AND SALT CONTENT.

In order to safeguard the shipment of butter over the legal moisture content of 16 per cent., the practice of testing each churning forwarded for grading has been continued. By this means all over-moisture butter can be withheld from shipment and is returned to the respective dairy companies to be reconditioned. During the year 188,470 churnings were tested, 0.3 per cent. being over the legal limit.

Salt tests totalled 171,111. Of these, 0.1 per cent. were not in accord with the regulation range, and were withdrawn from shipment. By request a few shipments below the minimum legal limit, to fill special orders requiring a very light salting, have been permitted.

GRADING OF CREAM.

A fairly close adherence to the standards set by the Division for the grading of cream has been maintained, and although complaints have been received that some companies were inclined to be easy in their standard of grading, and more especially with border-line cream, these on investigation were not substantiated. It is generally conceded that cream-grading, together with an increased daily delivery, has considerably decreased the quantity of lower-quality cream delivered to the factories.

GRADING OF MILK.

The grading of milk and payment according to grade has continued along satisfactory lines, the combined curd and reductase tests being in general use. Although it is optional to grade either daily or at least three times each ten-day testing-period, quite a number of companies have adopted daily grading, recognizing that this method is the most satisfactory in maintaining a more uniform milk-supply.

FARM DAIRY INSTRUCTION.

Thirty-nine Farm Dairy Instructors—three more than for the previous year—have been carrying out this service during the year, and a striking result of the instruction given by these officers has been the improvement shown in the quality of the cream from suppliers, who previously delivered a poor-quality article. It is very evident, therefore, that there is an urgent need to make this service Dominion-wide in its application in order to ensure the delivery of a greatly improved milk and cream supply.

These thirty-nine officers are employed by eighty-nine dairy companies, whose suppliers number 36,092, of a total of 70,258 for the whole of the Dominion. There are therefore 34,166 suppliers who receive no direct instruction in the care and handling of their milk and cream supplies.

INSPECTION OF MILKING-MACHINES.

As the installation of new and reconditioned milking-machines is governed by the regulations the necessary work of inspection is carried out by Farm Dairy Instructors in the districts where these officers are operating, and elsewhere by the Butter and Cheese Instructors and Check-testing Officers. Vending and erecting firms desire to co-operate with the Division, and it is a pleasing feature that very few erections are now found to contravene the regulations. Any minor alterations that may be required are readily made. During the year notification of 2,454 installations were received, as compared with 1,608 for the previous year.

CHECK-TESTING SUPPLIERS' MILK AND CREAM SAMPLES AT DAIRY FACTORIES.

During the year check tests numbering 440 were carried out by Divisional officers. A pleasing feature of the testing as carried out by the dairy companies is the very few variations found between the factory results and the check tests. It is now the exception for the Division to receive samples of milk or cream from suppliers for check-testing which is an indication that the factory testing is being carried out on approved lines and that suppliers generally are satisfied with the general accuracy of the factory tests.