

Produce was loaded into 108 vessels in the period mentioned, or an average of slightly over two per week, and the average ports of loading for each vessel for *dairy-produce* works out at 3·67 per vessel, arrived at as follows :—

5 vessels loaded dairy-produce at 1 port only.
 16 vessels loaded dairy-produce at 2 ports only.
 21 vessels loaded dairy-produce at 3 ports only.
 39 vessels loaded dairy-produce at 4 ports only.
 21 vessels loaded dairy-produce at 5 ports only.
 6 vessels loaded dairy-produce at 6 ports only.

—
 108 vessels, with 398 calls at ports for loading dairy-produce.

(Many of these vessels also loaded cargo at other ports from which no dairy-produce was exported.)

The average of 3·67 ports of call for each vessel loading dairy-produce represents a reduction when compared with the average of previous years.

The comparison figures are as follows :—

1933-34—122 vessels with an average of 3·77 ports per loading.
 1934-35—111 vessels with an average of 4·00 ports per loading.
 1935-36—104 vessels with an average of 3·98 ports per loading.
 1936-37—108 vessels with an average of 3·67 ports per loading.

The complete arrangements for allocation of vessels for shipment of dairy-produce, for loading itineraries, and for quantities for shipment from the several grading ports, are settled, after discussion, with representatives of the shipowners. The shipping officer of the Department is constantly in touch with the Overseas Shipowners' Allotment Committee in an endeavour so to arrange the shipping programme that, as far as is possible, all grading ports will be cleared of produce evenly, according to date, and that there will be regular arrivals in the United Kingdom in quantities to suit the market requirements.

The Department has had the co-operation of the dairy companies in the despatch of increased quantities of butter and cheese to United Kingdom outports. During the season just closed the arrangements for supplies to the ports of Southampton, Avonmouth, Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Newcastle, and Hull, owing to the system of centralized control, have been much more satisfactory than hitherto.

SUPERVISION AND INSPECTION OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT OF DAIRY-PRODUCE.

In the interests of the preservation of the quality of dairy-produce, supervision and inspection of shipping and transport is essential. This service was established by the New Zealand Dairy Board in 1924, and excellent results quickly followed. The Department has three officers in New Zealand and one in London engaged in this work.

The Department is paying for dairy-produce on the basis of quality as determined by the grading-points allotted by Government graders, and any deterioration in quality through mishandling or through faulty stowage, or carriage of produce at incorrect temperature, means a direct loss to the Department.

The Inspectors of this Department collaborate with officers of the Dairy Division of the Department of Agriculture in connection with the care of produce in cool stores.

The following is a summary of the measures adopted by the Department's Inspectors to safeguard the quality of butter and cheese :—

- (a) Inspection of coastwise vessels carrying butter and cheese, and the taking of the necessary steps to ensure cleanliness, and to avoid taint of butter through proximity to other cargo.
- (b) Periodic visits to cool stores to check method of stacking produce and, in co-operation with officers of the Dairy Division of the Department of Agriculture, checking freezing temperatures in the case of butter storage, and temperatures and relative humidity in the case of cheese storage.
- (c) Inspection of the transport of all the dairy-produce sent coastwise, and the taking and recording of temperatures.
- (d) Supervision of the conditions of handling produce from railway-trucks to ship's slings to prevent careless handling.
- (e) Taking and recording temperatures of both butter and cheese at the time of tender from the cool stores to overseas vessels.
- (f) Inspection of all refrigerated spaces on each overseas vessel as far as possible prior to loading, to see that such spaces are clean, properly battened to give the necessary air-spacing for cooling, and that they are free from foreign odours likely to contaminate butter, such as from fuel-oil fumes, fruit, bonemeal, and the like.
- (g) The placing from time to time of temperature-recording thermographs in the cargo to register the temperature for the period of the voyage of carrying-vessels.
- (h) A general supervision of the stowage during loading to prevent damage from crushing, and to allow for air circulation in holds.
- (i) On discharge at ports in the United Kingdom, an inspection of each hold to take temperatures of the butter and cheese at varying points to check up with the ship's logged temperatures.