

hundredweight for part of their season's output, and even during the present season one of them has realised the satisfactory figure of £2 14s. This affords a fair indication of what might be the rule rather than the exception were all the factories as successfully managed. In this connection I regret to say that in two factories visited I found the cheese in an unwholesome state, and quite unmarketable. No less than 70 tons of cheese, in the aggregate, were thus rendered unprofitable to the milk-suppliers, and great discouragement given to the dairy industry in the district. The keeping-qualities of the cheese of too many of the factories visited were very poor, besides which the cheese were deficient in that firmness of body and nutty, buttery quality so much desired in a good Cheddar cheese. These and other defects, their causes and remedy, I pointed out whenever I found it necessary. What is wanted is a close-cutting, firm-textured, finely-flavoured, and mild cheese, which will be ready for the market in from eight to ten weeks, and which may be kept for a year without injury. The present shape and style of a great portion of our New Zealand cheese do not put us on an equal footing for competing successfully with Canada and other countries. No Cheddar cheese under 60lb. weight should be sent Home. The measurement should be 12in. by 14in. The mouldy and badly-finished appearance of much of the New Zealand cheese has a damaging effect on its sale. Care in these apparently trivial points will be well rewarded by increased remuneration; for slight defects in appearance, not to mention in quality, are readily seized hold of by Home buyers in order to beat down prices.

Before concluding these remarks on the products themselves, I may add a word regarding the general cleanliness of the factories that have come under my notice. It hardly needs to be pointed out that cleanliness is an absolute essential to any attempt at cheese-making that is to have the smallest chance of success. The fact that milk is extremely liable to be injuriously affected by noxious odours seems to have been lost sight of in some cases that came under my notice. In the factories I have already alluded to as being most successful, it is worthy of note that scrupulous attention is paid to this matter of cleanliness. In fact, I might just say that extreme cleanliness is the cardinal virtue without which success in this industry is impossible.

Having said this much regarding the factory and its surroundings, I shall now insert a few remarks regarding that source of the factory's strength or weakness, the milk-supplier. It is not sufficiently kept in view by most suppliers and many factory-managers that their interests are identical. The making of a good cheese does not begin at the factory—the operation starts with the milk-supplier. Hence it should be the object of the supplier to bring the milk in a perfectly sound state to the factory; for, unless it is in that condition, the manufacture of a first-class product is impossible. Great care should be taken to keep the cow-shed clean and free from odours by daily cleansing and periodical washings. As milk is a substance so ready to absorb odours, it should be taken from the cow-shed immediately on being drawn from the cow. If at all possible it should then be delivered at the factory. This will prevent any chance of injury being done to it by its being left standing in close cans all night. It is the exception rather than the rule for makers to insist on the milk being brought at once, either to save themselves or their suppliers trouble. But this method greatly increases the maker's risks, for he is at the mercy of the supplier's ideas of cleanliness. I have made it my business, when taking in the milk at the various factories visited, to observe carefully the state in which the milk was brought. If it was defective in quality or was contaminated by noxious odours, I advocated its rejection by the manager. As an instance in point I may mention one that came under my notice during my round of the factories. When receiving it in at a certain factory, I discovered that the milk of one of the suppliers had an offensive odour. I had it rejected, and promised to the supplier that I should go to his place and endeavour to find out the cause, particularly as he alleged that it was in the condition in which it had come from the cow. I found that he was in the habit of cooling his milk overnight by leaving the cans standing in a tub of stagnant water which gave off an abominable stench. As this tub stood amidst the noxious odour of the cow-shed, the milk was contaminated by the odour from two sources, and was thus rendered quite unfit for factory purposes. The settler at once rectified the matter. But it is obvious that the manager should have been on the alert for anything so likely to injure, if not ruin, the whole day's manufacture. In many instances where unsound milk is taken into a factory it is not due so much to the want of observation on the part of the manager, but to the fear on his part that he may give serious offence to his milk-suppliers, who are also, it may be, his employers. I will mention only to condemn a detestable practice in vogue in some places, where the sour whey is taken home from the factory in the milk-cans. The chances are that in some instances the cans may be imperfectly cleansed, and thus a new risk is added to the already too many that the manager has to contend with.

Being strongly convinced that more combined effort amongst those interested or engaged in the dairy industry would result in much good, I took the initiative during the currency of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition in calling a meeting of representatives of the South Island dairy factories. At this meeting, which was very fairly attended, a committee was appointed to carry out details in forming an association for the desired object. This committee have issued a circular (a copy of which is hereto appended) setting forth the name and objects of the association, together with the terms of membership, &c. I trust that no feeling of local jealousy will be allowed to interfere with the carrying-out of the project. As the scheme is of considerable importance to farmers, and is one from which they are likely to derive substantial benefits, it is to be hoped that the Government will deem it proper to afford them all possible assistance. Following is the circular referred to:—

“DEAR SIR,—

“Dunedin.

“On the invitation of the Government Dairy Expert, a meeting of representatives from most of the dairy factories in the South Island was held in Dunedin on the 23rd April, and, after a full discussion, it was unanimously resolved that it would be most desirable, and to the advantage