

EGG MARKETING SECTION

The policy of setting up egg marketing emergency areas, which was initiated during 1942 under authority of the Egg Marketing Emergency Regulations 1942, has been continued during 1943. These areas now include Tauranga, New Plymouth, Wanganui, Palmerston North, North and South Wairarapa, Blenheim, Timaru, and Invercargill, in addition to the normal egg marketing areas. Surpluses from these towns, after provision of a ration for civilian purposes and essential needs, have been forwarded to Wellington and Auckland for priority purposes. It has been possible by this method to ensure to expectant and nursing mothers, young children, and certified medical cases in the marketing areas ("civilian priorities") a steady week-by-week quota and also to supply during the year as follows:—

	Eggs. Dozen.
United States Forces	306,000
New Zealand Forces	583,000
Shipping	211,000
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	1,100,000

In Auckland and Wellington eggs have been rationed on a definite basis, and it has been possible to extend this method to some other emergency areas. In Wellington alone civilian priorities received 364,000 dozen. Any balance remaining after priorities have been supplied has been distributed through retail channels as equitably as possible. In Wellington, and more recently in Christchurch and Dunedin, for example, the distribution is an actual egg ration related to the butter ration. The number of eggs available has, of course, varied according to the season, and weekly announcements of the egg ration have been made through the press and the radio to overcome possible misunderstandings between traders and consumers.

It would appear that there has been some little increase in production during the year, but in spite of this the intake through the controlled marketing areas showed very little increase on the figures of previous years of approximately 8,000,000 dozen. Australia again assisted our total New Zealand requirements of eggs and processed eggs by supplying—

Egg-pulp	75,000 28 lb. tins.
Egg-powder	110 tons bulk.

These imports amount in shell egg equivalent to 2,314,200 dozen. Arrangements are again being made with Australia to supply egg-pulp (but not egg-powder) in the coming year. Our ultimate aim is to increase egg-production in New Zealand to meet full local needs and Armed Forces' demands.

The subsidy approved during the previous year to meet freights and extra handling charges on eggs consigned to Wellington and Auckland has been continued and has assisted in making sufficient quantities of eggs available for shipping and Armed Forces.

During this coming flush period of production it is expected that a quantity of egg-pulp will be manufactured in New Zealand and that therefore the Australian importations will be less during 1944 than last year.

During the year amendments have been made to existing regulations, including authority for the more effective control of egg-pulp and storage of egg-pulp or eggs in cool store. The regulations now provide for better control of the retail sale of eggs and authorize the Minister to acquire any eggs or egg products that are being sold in a manner prejudicial to orderly marketing. A clause allowing for compensation in such cases is included.

The comprehensive Price Order introduced during 1942 has been strictly adhered to during the year, and has achieved its original objective of fixing maximum prices over the whole of New Zealand instead of the previous method of fixing maxima in large consumer areas only, allowing country districts to work under supply and demand conditions. This year, also, there has been a marked tendency towards co-operative egg marketing. In all emergency areas producers have intimated their desire to take a greater interest in the marketing of their products, and such desire has resulted in several of the egg floors being set up on a co-operative basis. The assistance rendered by the co-operative dairy units has been most helpful in the successful establishment of these floors.

The New Zealand Poultry Board and Government Departments have been most helpful in egg marketing problems and have materially assisted in overcoming many of the difficulties experienced throughout the year.

IMPORTED FRUIT SECTION

The volume of imported fruits received this year in New Zealand is much smaller than before the war. Far from decreasing the need for the Divisions' work, this has increased it. With restricted sources of supply, fewer ports of entry, less regularity in deliveries, a general fruit scarcity, and greater demand, the Division's functions of importing and distributing these fruits have assumed great importance.

During the war period neither suitable shipping space nor the fruit itself has been available from Jamaica, as the British Ministry of Food had stated that England required all citrus possible from what was New Zealand's main source of supply during the Southern Hemisphere's off season. Therefore it has been necessary to rely on Australia and the Cook Islands for our wartime requirements. For this reason it has been impossible to avoid a short period each year when fruit-shops have been unable to obtain supplies of oranges. Nevertheless, sufficient fruit has been held in cool store at all times to meet hospital and other essential requirements. Although Australian citrus crops have generally been below previous production quantities and the requirements of the Australian Government for Armed Services' needs have been heavy, the Division has received an excellent response from the Australian citrus organizations and Commonwealth Government.