

*Quality and Grading of Cream.*—Feed flavours were not as pronounced as in the previous season, and cream affected with unclean flavours showed a marked reduction. There is, however, a tendency in some districts to grade to a lenient standard where there is competition for supply. Consequently check grading of cream at these creameries requires continued and close attention. Some managers aim at correlating the grading of cream with the butter grade and when the butter is grading high they adopt a more lenient standard of cream grading. Where this practice exists the tendency is for suppliers to relax accordingly, with the result that the work of the Farm Dairy Instructor is less effective and the standard of quality of cream lowered. Where such conditions obtain the importance of maintaining a correct and uniform standard of grading throughout the year, irrespective of butter quality, is always stressed by officers.

*Staffing of Creameries (Butter-factories).*—Owing to increased outputs and shortage of labour the staffing of several dairy factories has been more difficult than in the previous year. This has resulted in reduced efficiency during the flush months. Difficulty is being experienced in attracting the most suitable type of young men to take up dairy-factory work and many of those at present engaged in the industry appear to be reluctant to accept increased responsibility and promotion.

If this position continues, the selection of competent executives to replace those retiring from the industry is likely to be a problem in the near future.

The housing position at dairy factories has improved, but the problem has not yet been overcome. With good housing available, the dairy industry offers ample scope for careers for young men who are prepared to fit themselves educationally and to work and thus qualify for the higher positions.

#### CHEESE INSTRUCTION

*Starters.*—The use of single-strain starters in cheese-factories is now almost universal and even in Canterbury and Otago, which previously used mixed strains, their use is being extended each year.

Eight separate strains are available and these are commonly used on a four-day rotational basis, with two strains each day. A noticeable feature is that starter failures have become more prevalent, even in Southland, which previously enjoyed almost complete immunity. It would appear that more extensive use of these cultures has concentrated bacteriophage, which affects their vitality to an extent that renders protective measures during propagation and the process of manufacturing more difficult.

Starter failures have an obvious effect on cheese quality, and there is a feeling in the industry that the difficulty which exists in attaining the desired closeness is related in some measure not only to the actual failures of the cultures but also to a general falling off in their vigorous action.

An alternative to single-strain cultures would be to revert to the use of the mixed strains previously used, and the general reluctance to do this is influenced by the desire of cheese-factory managers to maintain the closeness of texture which is so desirable, a characteristic which up to the present has been more easily obtained when using the single-strain type of culture.

*Penicillin.*—Reports received from the Gisborne, Southland, and South Taranaki districts indicate that the use of penicillin by farmers in the prevention of mastitis in their dairy herds has caused some hold up in the development of acidity during manufacture through the milk from cows treated with this drug being delivered for cheesemaking.

It does appear certain that this sometimes happens, and with a view to reducing trouble from this source district officers have been instructed to keep a close watch on the position and to advise managers of the possibility of interference with normal manufacture from this cause.