

Some of the advantages gained from the more positive policy of farm dairy instruction implemented in 1947 are now becoming apparent.

Classification of milking-sheds and milking-machines has become more uniform, and the adoption of rotational inspections has resulted in an increased number of visits in relation to the total mileage travelled by Instructors. In the main the change in policy has been well received by the dairy industry, and individual factory managers have commented most favourably on its introduction.

Complaints and criticism of grading and allied matters have been less prevalent since the adoption of a stricter attitude by officers to the sanitary condition of dairy sheds and equipment as a source of contamination. A few suppliers have, however, been inclined to criticise this firmer approach, but in all cases investigated it was found that the conditions at the dairy justified the action taken.

In the last year 3,822 notices were served, 167 of which forbade the removal of produce from dairies until such time as they had been satisfactorily cleaned. Officers have felt that in all cases where closures have been applied because of uncleanness they have had the support of dairy companies and suppliers who are interested in maintaining and improving the quality of dairy produce.

The need of a stricter attitude in those cases where the state of sanitation at dairies was persistently unsatisfactory had been apparent for some years, and it was not until after the matter had been given consideration that it was decided that, if the farm dairy instruction service was to be effective as a means of raising the quality of milk and cream, a more positive approach to uncleanness was necessary. The change in policy which has now been in operation over the past three seasons has proved that although the percentage of bad sheds and machines remains high, the consensus of opinion of those in close touch with the work is that the means adopted is proving effective and that the number of sheds and machines which were usually found to be in a consistently bad condition are steadily being improved. In line with a more positive policy the standard of classification was raised; consequently the figures do not indicate the actual improvement in conditions generally. The success achieved in this direction is in a large measure due to the encouragement given by officers to producers to improve the standard of sanitation.

In dealing with the more difficult and persistently bad cases the attitude adopted must be one of inspection, but in all other respects the service given by officers is predominantly one of instruction. There is reason to believe that this is appreciated by producers and is evidenced by the numerous requests made to officers for help and advice in locating the cause of quality defects, the selection of shed-sites, and general planning of the layout.

Occasions do arise when the action taken is criticised, but on the whole it can be accepted that improvements are being effected which will ultimately be of benefit to the dairy industry.

The difficulty of obtaining satisfactory replacements for Farm Dairy Instructors retiring or leaving the service has not decreased during the year and consequently there have been vacancies for varying periods in some districts.

MILKING-MACHINES

During the year 1,717 new and 1,052 used milking-machines, a total of 2,769 machines, were installed. In the previous year the figures were 1,456, 953, and 2,409 respectively.

CHECK TESTING OF MILK AND CREAM SAMPLES

This work was continued as part of the routine duties of Dairy Instructors and Special Inspectors, who during the year checked the factory testing at 684 visits and checked 4,128 samples. The check testing revealed that with few exceptions the work has been carried out accurately and conscientiously. Warnings in regard to compliance with the regulations were issued where necessary.