

Cheese-cases.

The type of cheese-case used by our producers is, I believe, satisfactory, providing the cheese is properly packed therein. Frequently during the present season I have seen cheese that have been damaged by the crowns adhering to the centre-boards, and often to such an extent as to cause financial loss. This could be prevented by having the centre-board securely nailed to the battens with a type of nail that will not draw out of the timber readily. I recommend that a barbed nail be used, as the ordinary nails used in the making of the cases draw or spring out of the centre-board too readily when the case is being handled. It is also important that the cheese should have free play in the case. There should be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to 1 in. of air-space in each end of the cheese-case after the centre-board has been nailed to the battens. To do this it will be necessary to do the nailing when the case is lying on the ground, as if done when the case is standing up the top cheese will be pressing hard on the lower one. If this is done the advantage to be derived from the fixing of the centre-board will be very much lessened, as only one cheese will benefit thereby. If scale boards are used, and the centre-boards of the cases nailed as suggested, our cheese will open out in a much better condition than they do at present.

Tight-fitting cases: At the present time some of our producers are sending forward their cheese in tightly fitting cases, the cheese being too large for the cases. This is also a matter that should receive attention, as when cheese are packed in this manner they take on the shape of the case, and this reduces the market value to a certain degree, owing to the cheese being so unshapely.

The use of scale boards: The use of scale boards in the packing of our cheese could be used with advantage. The use of these would prevent the tearing-away of the crowns of the cheese if the cheese had been subjected to any abnormal conditions, such as condensation of moisture in cool-chambers, sweating, or heating. I would recommend that these be used.

Centre-boards: Centre-boards of cheese-cases should be at least 1 in. in thickness, as the cheese does not carry so well when a thin dividing-board is used.

Otago and Southland cheese-cases: Considerable improvement could be made in the turnout of our cheese-cases from Otago and Southland. If our producers could be persuaded to form a co-operative box company, similar to the Eltham institution, I believe a case of uniform size and style, with impressed brands, could perhaps be obtained at a lower rate than is possible under present conditions. Not only is this to be considered, but the appearance of their produce at this end would be greatly enhanced by such a movement.

The system of stencilling has nothing to commend it when used in marking the packages of our dairy-produce. I recommend the "impress" brand, with the use of rubber stamps for the purpose of numbering, dating, and otherwise marking the packages. I do not think that the Taranaki system can be improved upon in this respect.

THANKS.

The thanks of the Department are due to the representatives of the firm dealing in New Zealand dairy-produce in the United Kingdom for the hearty welcome and generous assistance extended to me since my arrival. Through such hearty co-operation on their part, and their desire to assist in improving the quality of our dairy-produce, my work here has been of a very pleasant and, I hope, profitable nature.

CONCLUSION.

After reviewing my observations of a few months at Home and speaking broadly, I believe that we are working along sound lines. All the defects commented upon are due to preventable causes. If the commendable inspection of dairy farms is persevered in it will bring about the necessary improvement of the raw material to enable producers to place a high-grade article of dairy-produce before the consumer here, the production of which will ensure satisfactory returns for capital and labour by those responsible for the manufacture. Paying attention to details, and by removing existing defects, we shall not have much to fear from our competitors in the open markets.

A very considerable quantity of our unsalted creamery butters has been sent to the Continent of Europe during the present season, but it is not possible to obtain reliable information as to the actual quantity.

From observations made by me since my arrival here I believe that in the near future the Department will have to consider the question of stamping with a guarantee stamp all packages of our U.S.W.P. butters intended for despatch to the Continent of Europe. This virtually will mean that the New Zealand Government will guarantee the butter in such packages to be free from boric acid or preservatives.

I have, &c.,

W. WRIGHT,
Inspector of Dairy-produce.

The Director of Dairy-produce Division,
Department of Agriculture, Commerce, and Tourists, Wellington.

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