

While the chilled-beef position has not altered materially during the year in comparison with the previous year, the trade in chilled beef, though small, continues to expand, and our knowledge about it grows. For the nine months ended June, 1936, the killings for export provided 119,653 quarters, the corresponding figures for the previous year being 49,297 quarters.

THE DAIRYING POSITION.

A more buoyant condition has marked dairy affairs generally, and this practically from the opening months of the 1935-36 producing season. The stocks of butter in cold storage in Great Britain have been low. This has been due primarily to reduced production rather than to increased consumption, and the consumption of imported butter by Britain has remained steady. The prices obtained for butter have advanced appreciably.

The year 1935 was marked by a decrease of 14,000 tons in the imports of cheese by the United Kingdom, this being due mainly to substantial falling off in the New Zealand supplies, but the Canadian supplies, which have been declining steadily for several years, continued to decline. Apparently, in the main because of the change in the supply position, the New Zealand returns from cheese advanced.

The figures for eleven months ended June, 1936, of the current dairying season indicate that there is an increase of 4.283 per cent. in butterfat production in comparison with the corresponding period of the 1934-35 season, and the trend in seasonal yield points to a production for the complete season ending July that will be within approximately 0.8 per cent. of the record production of the 1933-34 season.

For the eleven months ended June, 1936, the salted butter graded was 138,054 tons, and the unsalted 6,713 tons, a total of 144,767 tons, compared with 129,007 tons, 4,942 tons, and 133,949 tons respectively for the corresponding period of the previous season; an increase of 8.08 per cent.

The quantity of cheese graded for the eleven months ended June, 1936, were white, 58,041 tons; coloured, 27,156 tons; a total of 85,917 tons, compared with white, 63,300 tons; coloured, 28,953 tons; a total of 92,253 tons for the corresponding period of the previous season; a decrease of 7.65 per cent.

The increase in the production of butterfat proportionately is substantially greater than the increase in the number of dairy cows. Hence, the year was marked by an increase in the average butterfat production of all dairy cows in comparison with the previous year when the average was 210 lb., but it is estimated, in the absence of definite data, that the average butterfat production of all dairy cows for the 1935-36 season will be approximately 218 lb.: that of 1933-34 was 220.8 lb.

The tendency during recent years has been towards a greater proportion of the dairy production taking place in the early part of the season, and it seems that had the 1935-36 season been a normal one this tendency would have continued. Although the production for the first four months to the end of November was substantially less than that of the corresponding periods of the 1933-34 and 1934-35 seasons, the August production was appreciably higher than in either of the two immediately preceding seasons. Later the adverse spring weather caused a substantial decline which, however, was more than counterbalanced by the abnormally heavy production in the latter part of the summer. The exceptionally wet summer resulted in abundance of feed which gave the unusually heavy summer production of butterfat. In short, feed-supply was the governing factor in the 1935-36 dairy production, a fact which should serve to drive home the importance both of good feeding and the measures entailed in good economic feeding in our dairying economy.

The quality of dairy-produce has been well maintained. An increase in the proportion of cream delivered daily in conjunction with considerable improvement in dairy buildings, both on the farms and at the factories, has contributed towards improving or maintaining quality in the creamery butter. Complaints regarding certain butter-containers have been given attention with a view of remedying the position. In cheese-manufacture several matters, particularly in respect of storage and handling, that affect quality have been receiving close attention, and the average quality of the cheese has approximated that of the previous season. It is realized that there is still scope for improvement in the quality of some of our dairy-produce, and prospective means of bringing about improvement continue to receive consideration. The standards set by the Dairy Division for the grading of cream are being followed fairly closely, and it is considered generally that cream grading in conjunction with increased daily delivery has appreciably lessened the quantity of cream of inferior quality. Likewise in cheese-production the grading of milk with differential payments according to grade is recognized as of assistance in obtaining a better supply of milk.