

The "result" in this case is that the Babcock test is becoming discredited in many sections; and, further, in these same sections, as a natural sequence, the old system is becoming more firmly entrenched than ever before. The average farmer furnishing milk to a cheese factory has neither the time nor the inclination to study carefully the merits of the different theories which have been propounded. Moreover, he has not usually the scientific knowledge bearing on the case essential to a perfect understanding thereof; and, sad to relate, very often he does not yearn for it. "Fat reading versus fat reading 2 would be just as well understood by many dairymen if written "zero."

The point I wish to make is this. Both of the two methods based on the Babcock reading at present being advocated are much more nearly correct than the old method of pooling. But many factory patrons refuse to believe this, contending erroneously that where there is such a decided difference of opinion among "professors" they will let well enough alone and profit by remaining content with the old plan. Reforms are never very valuable unless they meet with strong opposition. Quite recently, a local cheese magnate stated at a factory meeting that, in his opinion, "the Babcock test was decidedly a failure as a basis for dividends." The new system means greater expense for the cheese manufacturer and more work for the cheesemaker. These two facts may afford a ready explanation of the determined opposition very often shown by these worthies towards it. Their interest is strong until interest on invested capital is secured by the one and wages by the other. They are not much exercised in spirit as to how the remaining anxiety is apportioned.

But some one advances the argument: "In many places the new method, after being tried for a season, has been discarded." We do not deny that this has actually occurred in a few cases, but only in a few. To secure proper results the test must be carefully handled. Very often this is not done. I heard of one factory last season where, for a time after its introduction, the average of error in the fat readings was nearly five per cent. Dissatisfaction is certainly caused by such work as this. But some of the strongest opposition has its origin in a widely different cause. Patrons who have been furnishing milk in large quantity, of poor quality, are very naturally displeased when their returns from a given weight of milk are one-fifth or one-quarter less than formerly. But what about the man who supplies milk high in fat per cent.? There is certainly no grumbling from him.

The harmonious testimony of the factorymen who have the fat system in operation is that, after a time, there is a most decided improvement in the quality of the milk furnished. And is not this one point alone worth something, since more butter-fat means more cheese within normal limits, as well as a better (?) quality in the product? The pooling system actually places a premium upon milk low in fat, since the richer the milk the lighter it is, and weight is the only consideration at the weigh-can of the pooling-system factory.

Many manufacturers contend that a change from the old system is not justifiable until such time as the cheese-eating public will pay for cheese according to the amount of butter-fat in it. This is, to a certain extent, a question to be dealt with by cheese boards. The farmer who furnishes the milk to the factory is, at present, more interested in the fact that there is a certain definite relation existing between the amount of fat in one hundred pounds of milk and the amount of cheese which can be produced from it. As I understand it, the advance step of richer milk, with corresponding higher price, is more of the nature of a bonusing scheme, commendable as it is. It is enough for the patron to know, for the time being, that the amount of fat measures the amount of cheese, and hence also determines, ultimately, the value of the milk from which it was manufactured.

The horizon of the dairy world has, at present, a few ominous clouds looming up. The prospects for the present season are not so promising as we would like, especially so far as cheese is concerned. This is a further argument for supporting those who are trying to place the industry upon the very best business basis. When returns are smallest is certainly the time when every man wants his honest right. In order to show conclusively that this matter is worthy of more than a few passing thoughts, would it not be well to have the direct testimony of some of those who have given the new system a longer or shorter trial?

If the old system is as unfair as many of us believe it to be, the sooner it is abolished the better for all factory patrons. On the other hand, if, as many contend, the new plan of operations is not worthy of adoption by reason of its not being a practical, workable scheme, the sooner this is known and the more quickly we cease to pay any attention to it the better. Let us have more light from men who know whereof they speak.

J. J. F.