

Milk

The domestic dairy sector is being characterized by its great dynamism, derived particularly from the excellent perspectives that the sector is offering the producers, which encourages them to make investments and improve the technology applied in their dairy industries.

Production figures have been growing year after year; from 1984 to date, the most representative indicator of the level of activity of the sector, in other words the volume of milk received in the processing plants, has more than doubled, increasing in this period from 491.5 to 1,121.1 million liters per year. This has meant an average yearly rate of growth of 9.5% over the last eight years.

There is no doubt that one of the determining factors of this noteworthy rise in the domestic dairy sector has been the rapid growth in the consumption of dairy products over the last few years. Apparent consumption per capita of all dairy products in the country, expressed as the equivalent of liquid milk, has grown from 91.6 liters per year in 1988 to 125 liters per year in 1992. For 1993 a figure of 132 liters per capita per year is being projected.

The growth in the demand has not only provided an outlet for the greater supply originating from within the country, but has also made it necessary to increase the volume of imports of dairy products, which over the last year have come close to US\$ 50 million - an increase of 90% in relation to the previous year.

With regard to this matter, it is worth mentioning that imports of skimmed powdered milk have increased from 7,633 tons in 1990 to 10,252 in 1992, with additionally a significant increase in the mean import price.

During 1992, imports will be made for a sum of US\$ 18 million, while during the first months of 1993 there have been new increases in these imports in relation to the same period in the previous year, which were 13.9% in terms of volume and 18.7% in terms of value.

A similar situation has occurred with unskimmed milk, with 12,921 tons being imported in 1992 - the equivalent to US\$ 22.3 million. Likewise, during the first few months of 1993, the volume of this product that was imported increased by 14.1% and its value by 22.5% in relation to the previous year.

To these two products there have also been added significant increases in the imports of cheeses, curd cheese, and butter, each one of which during 1992 represented an expenditure of US\$ 1.3 and 2.7 million respectively.