

The City Milk Supply.

Supplying milk to the towns and cities is a very important branch of dairying. The number of cows being milked for this purpose, and the number of individuals who make a living by selling and delivering the milk to various customers, is much larger than many not intimately connected with the trade would imagine. This trade is so large that for many miles around the great centres of population there are dairymen who make a business of keeping cows to supply milk to the city.

This branch of dairying deserves, perhaps, more attention than it usually gets, not merely on account of its extent, but because it has so much to do with the health of many of our citizens. Good, wholesome, normal milk, when taken in a pure unadulterated state, is one of the most nourishing and healthful of foods. But connected with this fact of its being a perfect food there is the fact that its constituents are of such a kind as to furnish one of the very best mediums for the growth of all kinds of germ life. So suitable a medium is it that if pure milk is placed near stagnant water, in foul, filthy stables, or near any place where disease-producing or injurious germs are lurking around, they are absolutely sure to come into contact with the milk and to grow and multiply very quickly, communicating their peculiar characteristics to it; and if they are disease-producing in their nature will, in all probability, communicate the disease to the individual who takes that milk as a food.

This peculiar characteristic of milk being established, the duties devolving upon the producer and vendor of milk in the cities are of the most important kind. To a certain degree, the health of a great many people will depend upon how he performs them. If he is negligent regarding the care and feeding of his cows, regarding the condition and surroundings of his stables, and is careless regarding the preservation of the milk in its pure condition from contact with sources of injurious germ life, he not only will be unable to supply his customers with a wholesome article of food, but will endanger their health, and perhaps their lives, because of the injurious foreign matter in the milk.

There are certain points that should be strictly observed by all producers of milk, and more especially those who are catering to the city milk trade. All cows kept for this purpose should be examined by a competent individual at regular intervals. They should be supplied with good nourishing food, and nothing that would injure the flavor or quality of the milk should come into their diet.

The strictest cleanliness should also be observed in every detail, not only in connection with the stables and surroundings of the cows, but in regard to the cows themselves. It is surprising how much filth and dirt is seen clinging to cows which are giving milk. Their bodies are sometimes barnyards and manure heaps in miniature. When cows in such condition are being milked this filth will invariably fall into the pail, and become part of the product that will tickle the consumer's palate.

Dr. Backhaus, of Germany, stated, in a recent publication, that, from the results of his examination of the milk supply of Berlin, he estimated that the inhabitants of that city consume daily about 3 cwt. of cow dung in their milk. If this is the case in that country, where scientific training is so highly developed, what would the quantity be where so much attention is not paid to scientific methods?

Cleanliness is a good antidote for all kinds of germ life. All milking utensils should be kept perfectly clean and pure. They should be washed first with lukewarm water, and then thoroughly sterilized by boiling hot water, and, after being scalded, should be placed where they will come in contact with the direct rays of the sun, which is also a good destroyer of germ life. It will pay every producer of milk to devote considerable time to the cooling and aerating of the milk. The latter is almost a necessity if a pure-flavored milk is desired.

There is an important feature of this trade that should not be overlooked, and that is milk inspection. Citizens who purchase milk must have some guarantee that the article they buy is genuine, and is not half water or devoid of any butterfat. This part of the business is usually managed by the municipalities themselves, which employ an inspector or health officer to test the milk, examine the cows, and see that the citizens' interests are well looked after. This is, perhaps, the best method to adopt, and if the individual employed is competent, and deals justly with all concerned, will give good results and serve the purpose well.

Not long ago, however, in one of our large cities, the milk vendors had a serious grievance against the inspector, who, they claimed, did not do his duty properly. He was charged with favoring certain individuals, and in not having any uniform method of testing. Whether this officer was to blame or not we are unable to say. But there must have been something wrong with the system in this particular case, as the local milk dealers were almost unanimous in their opposition to the inspector. The grievances were