

The Memorial on Cheese Prices

As Presented to the Hon. T. A. Crerar, Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, on February 21st

WE, the dairymen of the Province of Ontario in convention assembled desire to memorialize the Dominion Government that the price of cheese for the year 1918 be set at a higher figure than that for the season of 1917.

In presenting this we first wish to point out our deep appreciation of the work accomplished by the Cheese Commission during the past season.

We consider the price set for last year was generally accepted as a fair remuneration, but owing to the increase in cost of production and manufacturing, it will be necessary for the producer to receive a substantial increase in the price of cheese for the coming season.

If the price of cheese is not such that the producer can realize a fair margin of profit, many of our best dairymen will be driven out of the business, and we view with alarm the possible disorganization of Ontario's greatest industry, which has been built up by the untiring efforts of half a century. We also wish to call your attention to the fact that to the by-product of the cheese factories can be attributed to a large measure, the number of bacon hogs produced in Ontario.

No selfish motive prompts us in this matter. We feel it a patriotic duty to produce to the utmost of our capacity, but we feel that the production of cheese will materially decline if the price is not arranged to allow for the producer a fair margin of profit.

In addition to all this the producers of milk for the manufacture of cheese are compelled to meet the competition from milk condenseries, milk powder factories, and town and city milk trade, in all three of which there is practically no limit set for the price to be paid for milk, whereas the cheese-milk producer has a price limit set for his finished goods. This makes unfair competition.

Taking the average price paid for milk by condenseries and powder milk concerns during the year 1917, which prices or ever higher are likely to be sold in 1918, and after making due allowance for the added value of the by-product, whey, in cheese manufacture, it would seem reasonable that the price of cheese for 1918 ought to be materially increased in order to place the cheese factory patrons and manufacturers on equal basis with other lines of the dairy industry.

Increasing Costs.

We submit for your consideration the following comparisons:
From reports of auction of dairy cattle sales and other reliable sources dairy cattle are averaging from 15 to 25 per cent. higher than the prices realized in 1917.

The price of feed, which figures largely in the cost of production, has materially increased during the past few months. Bran is quoted f.o.b. Fort William at \$24.50 and shorts at \$29.60 in car load lots. These prices have been fixed by the Food Controller. With freight charges and dealers' profits added, this means a price to the farmer of from \$38 to \$40 a ton and 50¢ shorts of \$44 to \$46 a ton. Even at this price bran and shorts can be obtained only in very limited quantities making it necessary for the dairymen to feed even more expensive concentrates such as oil cake meal and glucose, etc. These also have increased in price from \$2 to 40 per cent.

Labor.

The labor situation is acute. It is almost impossible for the dairymen, on account of the nature of the work involved, to secure competent help. In 1918 dairymen will have to pay at

least 25 per cent. more wages for labor than in 1917.

Manufacturing.

On account of the great scarcity of material used in the manufacture of cheese, the cost of manufacturing has been materially increased. This increase equals at least one-half cent a pound of cheese.

It is the opinion of this convention that a higher price for cheese resulting in a reasonable profit to the producer would maintain and stimulate the production which is so essential in this present crisis.

Cost of Production.

To show that the producer has not been getting an undue margin of profit we beg to submit the following statement taken from a press report issued under date of Feb. 11th, by Mr. E. S. Archibald, Dominion Animal Husbandman, of the Central Experimental Farm.

"We recently compiled the cost of production in a herd which produced 6500 lbs. per cow, and with feed at present prices discovered that we were scarcely breaking even, although valuing milk at \$2.50 per cwt. The average prices realized by dairymen supplying milk to cheese factories last year ranged from \$1.65 to \$1.85 per cwt., according to districts and methods of handling the milk.

In another press report issued by the Dominion Experimental Farm last week we find this statement:

"In one investigation conducted on 25 dairy farms keeping an average of 400 cows, the average profit per cow per year was \$5.25, which out of 25 dairies 28 per cent. reaped no profit at all."

The overhead charges upon the average dairy farm have increased in the past year by at least 25 per cent.

We would also suggest that one member of the cheese purchasing commission for 1918 be a practical dairyman.

We wish to assure you, Sir, that our sole object in asking for this increase is to stimulate production. In this matter the dairymen are willing to cooperate with the Government. Is the Government willing to cooperate with the dairymen?—J. A. Campbell, T. A. Thompson.

Fraser Valley News

In sending News and Dairy a copy of their constitution and by-laws, Mr. C. E. Eckert, Secretary of the Fraser Valley Milk Producers' Association, writes as follows:

"We have introduced two new features, which I think are very attractive to our members. One with reference to our election of directors. Instead of voting by proxy, where a few men vote the entire membership, we shall hold an election at each local, where every member may register his vote for the full number of directors to be elected. This makes the board the real choice of the membership.

"Then we have set aside 10 per cent. of our capital to be used for the purpose of redeeming a members' stock, or share, in case he becomes a non-producer. For renters or others who are in the dairy business temporarily, this affords a sure way of securing the benefits of members and a return of their capital when they retire from the business."

Two varieties of sweet corn, Golden Bantam and Stowell's Evergreen were tested by the Experimental Station in Ontario last season. The former was ready for the table in 94 days, the latter in 104 days. Golden Bantam too scored higher in number of ears, flavor and juiciness. As a table corn it seems to be in a class by itself.



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