

A STARTER.

By R. W. STRATTON, ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR IN CHEESE-MAKING.

The first step in making a starter is to provide a suitable can, one having double walls with an airtight, hollow space between, and tight fitting covers, is preferred, as with such a can a more even temperature can be maintained. Care should be taken that all seams in the can are well soldered, so as to leave no lodging place for bad germs.

We believe that the time has come when the pasteurizing method of preparing a starter should be adopted, as by this method, if proper care be taken, a good starter can be propagated for an indefinite period, and a good, uniform flavor be insured. In making a pasteurized starter, it can be done only after you have secured something to propagate the lactic acid, as the process of pasteurizing kills all the lactic acid germs. So in making a start, heat a small quantity of good flavored milk to a temperature of ninety degrees and allow it to sour. If a good flavored starter cannot be secured in this way, which is sometimes the case in certain localities, it may be necessary to procure a commercial starter or lactic ferment.

After selecting the milk, add from 15 to 20 per cent. of pure, cold water and heat to 158°, stirring constantly while it is being heated. Allow the heated milk to stand for twenty to thirty minutes at this temperature; then cool to 80° and add from two to three per cent. of the old starter. Stir well, cover up, and do not disturb it until it is required for use.

Before using, it will be better to remove from one to two inches of the milk from the surface of the can, as the flavor of the surface will be found not so good as that which is below. Then break up the remainder by stirring it well in the can, take out what is required and pour from one pail to another a few times, until it has a creamy consistency, when it will be ready for use. The indications of a good starter are, that the whole mass is firmly coagulated and no water is found on the top; and the flavor is pleasant to both taste and smell.

A starter may be used to advantage when the milk is maturing slowly, and when it is tainted or gassy. One per cent. of starter is the most that should be used at any time, and this quantity should be used only after you have ascertained the acidity of the milk by the rennet test, and have found it necessary. Do not ripen the milk so low by two or three seconds when using a starter. Bear in mind that a starter may be used to advantage only when it has a good flavor, and when the milk is in such a condition that its use is a necessity. The practice of using a starter when not needed, or of using one with a poor flavor, should be avoided.

1. Don't prepare your starter in a haphazard manner by leaving it in an open can or vessel while in a room where the air is impure.
2. Don't propagate your starter with anything but one having a good flavor.
3. Don't use a starter when it is not needed.
4. Don't use too much starter.
5. Don't use a poor starter—rather put it into the whey tank.
6. Don't forget that the flavor of the starter used will largely determine the flavor of the cheese made.