

Ripen or mature the milk so that sufficient acid for dipping will develop in from two and three-quarters to three hours after setting. When dipped the curd should not show more than one-eighth inch of acid by the hot iron test. Great care should be taken at this point, as the acid develops very rapidly.

Enough rennet should be used (from four to five ounces per 1,000 pounds milk) to coagulate the milk fit for cutting in from fifteen to twenty minutes. Use the horizontal knife first, then the perpendicular, cutting continuously until completed. Commence cutting early, taking plenty of time.

Stir the curd gently with your hands or with agitators for ten or fifteen minutes before any steam is turned on; also see that the curd is free from the sides of the vat before applying the steam.

Rough handling at this stage means a loss both in quantity and quality.

Heat the curd slowly to ninety-eight degrees, taking from thirty-five to forty minutes to do so. After the heat is up to the desired point, continue stirring for fifteen or twenty minutes to insure uniform cooking. Draw off part of the whey early and dip with a small acid, from one-sixteenth to one-eighth inches, having the curd in such condition that it will not require much stirring in the sink, then pack it from four to six inches deep, according to the condition of the curd, and when matted sufficiently, so that it can be turned without breaking, cut in strips from four to six inches wide and then turn every ten or fifteen minutes—or often enough to keep the whey from gathering on the curd. After they are turned once or twice, these strips may be piled two deep.

Keep up the temperature until the curd is ready for milling; then mill as soon as the curd becomes flaky and shows from three-fourths to one inch of acid. Stir often and air well. Salt when the curd becomes mellow, feels like velvet, and smells like newly-made butter. Use some brand of pure dairy salt, salting at the rate of one and one-half to two pounds of salt per 1,000 pounds of milk. The curd should be at a temperature of from eighty-three to eighty-five degrees, and when the salt is thoroughly dissolved the curd is ready to put to press.

Apply the pressure slowly at first. Do not be in a hurry to apply all the pressure until the whey runs clear, then gradually increase it. After the cheese has been in the press forty-five minutes or longer, take them out and pull up the bandages neatly, trimming them so as to leave about three-quarters of an inch on each end.

Turn all cheese in the hoops every morning and see that each cheese is finished perfectly before it leaves the press room.

The curing-room should be kept at an even temperature of from sixty-five to seventy degrees, and should be well ventilated.

NOTE.—When quick curing cheese (ready to ship in from ten days to two weeks) is not desired, use less rennet and more salt.

Many curing-rooms may be very much improved by placing two thicknesses of building paper on the inside of the present lining. Then nail two inch strapping on the paper and line with one or two thicknesses of matched lumber. The ceiling, as well as the walls, should be lined in this manner. Shutters on the windows, ventilators in the roof, and a supply of ice placed on suitable racks in the curing-room will save many dollars worth of cheese in hot weather. Sub-earth ducts are highly recommended by those who have used them.

For colder weather, a coal furnace which causes a circulation of air and an equal temperature in all parts of the room, night and day, is a necessity. An ordinary wood or coal stove is not suitable for heating a curing-room, as the heat is not evenly distributed among the cheese.