

Dairying from a Commercial Standpoint.

The following is the paper read by W. S. Grant at the recent meeting of the Manitoba Dairy Association, held in Winnipeg:—

In dealing with the question "Dairying from a Commercial Standpoint" it must be borne in mind that the manufacture of both butter and cheese in this province, on really scientific principles, is but in its infancy. In fact up to the present time only enough of either has been produced to take us beyond what might be termed the experimental state, and at the same time enough has been made to convince the most skeptical that for quality they cannot be excelled.

Accepting the statement that the quality is all that can be desired, the first question asked by any one contemplating investing capital in a creamery or cheese factory, and a most natural one is: Do you think it will pay in this country? I know as practical farmers you will smile at my presumption in attempting to answer the question as I have frequently heard the opinion of the practical man, on the desk farmer who farms on paper. I answer the question as follows by statements in which I think you will all agree with me—and let the enquirer draw his own conclusion. As a rule an abundance of good water and ice is obtainable. Our natural uncultivated prairie grass is so nutritious that the milk from animals feeding upon it yields about eight per cent. more butter and cheese from a given quantity of milk than the same quantity of animals fed on cultivated pasturage in other portions of the Dominion. Hay, comparatively speaking, will always be cheap. Bran and mill feed with the rapidly increasing output of our large mills must also be cheap, and as for root crops at every exhibition they speak for themselves. If oil cake is desired, we already have a mill in this city exporting large quantities. It appears to me in the face of the above facts if dairying pays any where it should pay here.

The second question the prospective dairyman asks is: If we make the butter or cheese can you find a market for it at a profitable price? To this I reply emphatically—Yes. If British Columbia continues to develop her resources and increase her population as during the past few years, and our own province increases in the same ratio, it will be many years before we have a surplus, after supplying the territory from Lake Superior to the Pacific. When this is accomplished it will then be time to consider shipment to the Atlantic seaboard, and if it was a question that had to be faced at once, with our saving in cost of production and a minimized freight, I see no reason why we could not in selling there to-day realize even better profits for the maker than would be made by the manufacturer and resident in one of the Eastern Provinces.

Allowing the above to be true the question that presents itself is: Why are there not more creameries and cheese factories in Manitoba, and why is there such a quantity of very poor butter made? The answer to this is: In many parts the population is too sparse to support a creamery or settlers have not suitable buildings to handle milk in, and again we have representatives of several nationalities who are entirely ignorant of the skill required to make butter or cheese suitable for this market. The all important subject in matters pertaining to dairy work is the same one that is of greatest importance to our national life, and that is education, and it is for our Association, if it is to be of any use to the Province, to take this matter in hand. Let it be known among our faint hearted farmers who lack confidence enough in each other to club together as patrons of a cheese factory, the prices realized on cheese this and former years. I am happy to see by the daily papers that the Manitou factory publishes the fact that their last sale to the firm in which I am a partner realized them equal to fifteen cents per pound for butter. Surely the patron in that neighborhood would not have published this if they were not

well pleased with the fact. Let it be known that during the heat of last summer when dairy butter was a drug in all the eastern cities we could pay one cent per pound more for it here than it could be bought for either in New York or Montreal, and as for our creamery butter it has all this season led our best dairy by five cents even six cents a pound. Does it seem strange that in the face of these facts the proprietors of our creameries, who have put in the most modern appliances and are turning out a very high class of article, have the greatest difficulty in persuading settlers to patronize them, although they are paying equal or more than eastern prices for the milk, and pay for the milk at the end of each month. There is evidently a need of education there.

Now for the class most difficult to reach and who require most education. I refer to two classes—one who lacks all the knowledge of making good butter of any sort—and the other who makes it according to the custom of his native land—and in many cases quite unsuitable for Canadian markets.

To instruct this class I would suggest the Local Government being petitioned to appoint an inspector of milk and cream, to also act as an instructor, his duties being to make unexpected visits to cheese factories and creameries, to have power to draw samples from cans while in transit to the factory, and in the case of discovering adulteration have power to prosecute. When not engaged inspecting to act as an instructor in municipalities requiring advice. It is a safe estimate to say that the loss to the Province this season on poor butter is at least \$50,000. A saving of a very small portion of the above sum would well repay the province for the outlay.

I will now refer to our defects, some of which have accompanied us from older Canada, and others have developed here under unavoidable circumstances, and all of which are detrimental to the interests of the Province. Farmers and dairymen seem to be possessed with the idea that in this Province to sell butter to the greatest advantage it must be held till late in the fall, the old idea in vogue ten years ago in eastern Canada, and through the pertinacity with which the dairymen there have held to the idea, Canada from being a large exporter of butter has to a great extent lost her export trade. Many present may not be aware of the fact that two years ago Canadian creamery held for sale in the fall, when sent to Great Britain compared so unfavorably with the goods being offered there, that it paid the owners to ship the goods back to Canada and sell for what it would bring on this side.

In addition to the former reasons for selling while goods are perfectly fresh, in this market we have a reason peculiarly our own, and that is that owing to the difference in climate on the Pacific coast, if we are to hold that market we must sell when they are ready to buy, and not try to force them into waiting till late in our fall. You will see the force of this when you learn that California fresh roll butter arrived at Pacific coast points this year about January 26. If I am not mistaken their winter stock is purchased about the end of September, in fact before our dairymen consider it advisable to sell, and then they only require to carry stock, extending into the middle of our winter. This question requires our earnest attention.

Packages have also been a serious drawback. I am pleased, however, to observe as far as butter is concerned, a marked improvement, and dairymen are beginning to recognize the fact, that the difference in the price paid for butter in good packages more than makes up the difference for the loss on goods sold in old tubs or pails. As for cheese boxes they are a disgrace to the province, and of all we have shipped this season there were only two lots that might be considered first-class.

In conclusion I might add that during the past few days I have had reports from experts from Great Britain, the United States and Montreal on our selected dairy products of this season, and in every case the verdict has been: "Your goods are all that can be desired."

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