

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

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PRESS NOTICE

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NATIONAL MILK TESTING AND ADVISORY SCHEME

In accordance with the Government Policy for the Milk Industry announced in the White Paper (Command 6362) of 3rd June, 1942, the Ministry of Agriculture, through its Advisory Committee, is continuing to develop arrangements for the sampling and testing of milk to improve the keeping quality of the national milk supply, for the establishment of a more complete advisory service to milk producers and the dairy trade, and ultimately for providing for the payment of milk on a quality basis.

The Technical Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee has given special attention to the methods of sampling and testing to be adopted, and to the problems of obtaining and licensing the necessary laboratories and of providing the trained staff required to carry out both the testing and general supervision of this work. The detailed technique for a standard platform rejection test has been issued, and copies may be obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Lindum Hotel, St. Annes-on-Sea, Lancs.

It is hoped that with the introduction of the new producer's contract with the Milk Marketing Board on October 1st most of the larger creameries, milk depots and processing dairies will be duly equipped with licensed laboratories and the necessary certificated testing staff, but a further period must elapse before sampling and testing facilities can be made generally available for the smaller units. It has, therefore been decided that a system of price payment according to quality cannot be introduced next October, but the new contract has been drawn so as to enable this to be operated next summer if it is then found to be practicable.

Milk buyers will continue to exercise the right to reject unsatisfactory consignments of milk as they have hitherto done; and meanwhile the measures now initiated will be developed with a view to the establishment of as complete a check as possible on summer souring of milk next year. County War Agricultural Executive Committees, for their part, are completing their arrangements for advisory work based on the results of the tests made under the Scheme. Steps will also be taken to safeguard against the keeping quality of producers' milk being adversely affected by transport and churn cleansing difficulties at creameries and milk receiving depots.

Although the Scheme has not yet been applied universally there has been a substantial reduction in the loss of milk from souring this Summer compared with last. This indicates an improved general standard of milk production, shewing that both producers and the dairy trade are co-operating through the Scheme to the desirable end of securing improvement in the nation's milk supply.

The immediate emphasis has been laid on the control of summer souring by tests made during the warmer months, and the application of price differentiation, based on the results of those tests. But it is generally accepted that a system of prevention involving testing at regular intervals throughout the year accompanied by the necessary advisory services is the soundest on which to build permanently a clean milk supply. The Ministry, therefore, proposes to encourage this system of regular sampling and testing in all laboratories licensed under the Scheme and to investigate by practical experiments throughout the Country the problem of providing similar facilities for producers' milk supplies which are not delivered to creameries, etc. with licensed laboratory facilities. A system of this kind would, it is hoped, eventually result in the prevention of the undue incidence of souring at any season of the year, and would enable all producers of milk, including producer-retailers, to be brought within and enjoy the benefits of the scheme.