

1959 Milk Supply

(Continued from page one)

In any of the past 6 years. Milk production decreased slightly in 1958, after rising in each of the last five years, and only a small increase is expected in 1959. On the other hand, with an expansion in consumer incomes in prospect, total consumption of milk products will increase fully as much as the population.

Prices to farmers for manufacturing milk and butterfat are being supported at 75 per cent of parity this year, the lowest permitted by present legislation. The parity index has been essentially stable since last spring when the support level for this year was announced and if it continues so,

the legal minimum support for 1959-60 will be near that of this year.

The actual support level for the marketing year to start next April 1 will be announced before that time. With production likely to continue above commercial use, prices to farmers for manufacturing milk and butterfat are likely to continue around supports in 1959.

Milk cow numbers dropped 3 1/2 per cent in 1958, largely because of the rise in price of meat animals. Except in 1948, when the decrease was 4 per cent, this was the largest decrease of the post-war period. The number of milk cows on farms declined an aver-

age of less than 2 per cent per year from 1944 through 1957, with only one increase — in 1953.

The number of cows probably will decline further in 1959 but probably not as much as in 1958, since presumably the major adjustment to the sharply higher meat animal prices has taken place. Milk cow numbers probably will continue to trend downward after 1959 but the rate likely will be nearer the long-term average of a little under 2 per cent per year.

The average cow in the United States produced nearly 6300 pounds of milk in 1958. It first reached 5000 pounds in 1947. Production per cow has been increasing between 2 and 3 per cent per year on the average for more than a decade.

This has been accomplished by selection of superior producing strains and feeding of larger quantities of concentrates, along with increased amounts and improved quality roughages. Rates of increase in milk output per cow are not likely to fall off for some time, judging from changes in rates for some States with high averages and foreign dairy producing countries.

Milk prices to farmers declined slightly in 1958, following the

lowering of price supports on April 1. With little, if any, increase in sales, cash receipts declined a little in 1958 but in 1959 probably will be close to the record 46 billion dollars reached in 1957.

Total consumption of the different dairy products (combined in terms of milkfat), per person showed a slight rise from 1957 to 1958 but is about 14 per cent below the early 1940s. The rise in the per capita rate in 1958 over 1957 reflects increased distribution from CCC holdings and larger distribution of milk in school milk programs, consumption of all products combined from commercial sources declined in 1958.

So far this marketing year (which began April 1), CCC purchases of butter and cheese combined have been only a little over half those of a year earlier (on a milk equivalent, fat solids basis). Purchases of nonfat dry milk are about as large.

In the 12 months ended March 31, 1958, the CCC bought the equivalent of 6.8 billion pounds of milk, fat solids basis. In the current marketing year purchases will be fully 3 billion pounds or about 25 per cent of production. Purchases of solids nonfat in cheese and in nonfat dry milk,

will account for around 7 per cent of output. Stocks owned by CCC currently are the lowest in 6 years for cheese, butter and dry milk stocks, while also comparatively small, are a little above a year earlier.

Prices of dairy products from other dairy countries were sharply reduced in the past year, further reducing export outlets for US dairy products, of which commercial movement at domestic price levels accounts for less than one-fifth total dairy product exports last year.

Imports of dairy items by the United States were again at quota levels, little changed from other recent years.

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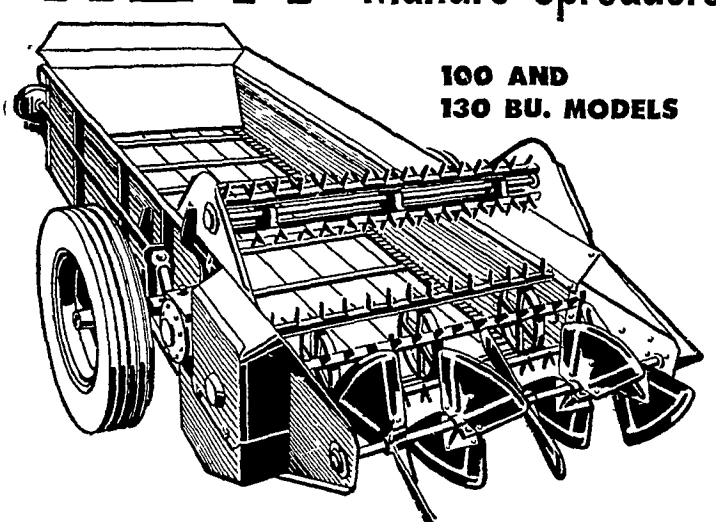
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