

Dutch Dairymen Seeking Larger Export Markets

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THE NETHERLANDS dairy industry, expanding in numbers of cows as well as in milk yield per animal, is continuing to seek new and enlarged foreign markets for its increased output of products. The greater share of the augmented milk supply currently is being channeled into production of cheese and specialty dairy products.

Total Dutch dairy cattle population appears to be headed for a rise of at least 5 percent this year from the estimated 1973 total of 2.1 million animals. This gain of a minimum 100,000 head, plus anticipated higher milk yield per cow, could increase total milk production by about 620,000 metric tons in 1974 to about 10 million tons—nearly 7 percent above the 1973 total.

Also, lower farm withholding and unchanged fluid milk imports could result in milk deliveries to dairy factories of between 9.6 and 9.7 million tons—an increase of 650,000 tons or 7 percent over those of 1973.

The larger total Dutch milk supply is likely to be used several ways:

- Cheese will use another 40-45 percent thereby raising factory cheese production 7-8 percent over 1973 output.

- Specialty products will take 20-25 percent pushing total Dutch production of these items by about 15 percent over 1973.

- Butter and nonfat dry milk will take 10-15 percent, nudging total Dutch butter production in 1974 about 3 percent over 1973's and nonfat dry milk output by about 10 percent over last year's.

- Whole dry milk will utilize 10-15 percent raising total output of this product by about the same amount.

- Condensed and evaporated milk will take 8.9 percent increasing total production by about 4-5 percent.

Except for larger volumes of cheese and nonfat dry milk that will be consumed domestically, by far the major share of the higher 1974 production will have to be exported. So far, prospects for higher exports in 1974 are bright, but this year's carryover stocks of butter and cheese probably may show some

increase over the relatively low 1973 carryover supplies.

Last year, the average number of dairy cows was 6.6 percent greater than in 1972. But lower milk production per cow limited the increase in total milk production to about 4.2 percent. The largest share—about 70 percent—of the increased milk supplies in 1973 was used for production of cheese and specialty products such as dietary food items. Remainder was used mostly for whole dry milk and condensed and evaporated milk production.

Since the domestic market took only a slightly larger volume of cheese, the bulk of all 1973 Dutch dairy output was exported. These shipments were facilitated by a relative shortage on the world market.

An even more pronounced increase of 6.6 percent in Dutch milk production is projected for 1974. Although the major part of the larger milk supplies again will be used in cheese and specialty product manufacture, prospects for marketing of other commercial dairy products also are favorable. Therefore a slight increase can be expected in 1974 butter production.

Cow numbers in 1973 were at an all-time high. Among the several reasons for this development were favorable financial returns for larger dairy farm operators and the accelerated structural changes in dairy farming in recent years.

Structural changes that have occurred are mainly those that increase efficiency by substituting modern equipment for labor. Such changes require higher cow numbers per farm for optimum results. The number of mechanical milking parlors has doubled since January 1, 1972 and in June totaled more than 6,000. During this same period the number of milk tank coolers on farms also has more than doubled and the number in use now totals well over 10,000.

The anticipated higher yield per cow in 1974 is based on the improved supplies of roughage during the winter of 1973-74 as well as the early spring of this year. The lower yield per animal in 1973 was due in part to the lower quality of roughage available at that time.

Volume of milk delivered to plants for manufacture of dairy products rose

from 8.5 million tons in 1972 to about 9 million tons in 1973. As a result, the quantity of milk held on farms dropped from about 479,000 tons in 1972 to about 430,000 tons in 1973. Of the 9 million tons moving into production, about 125,000 tons came from imports and about 26,000 tons from powder.

Because of increased foreign and domestic demand, a larger share of milk was diverted to commercial dairy products in 1973 and less to subsidized items such as butter and nonfat dry milk than had been anticipated early in the year. The higher domestic demand in 1973

was mainly for cheese and consumer milk products, while higher foreign demand was reported for practically all dairy products.

Developments in the first 6 months of this year seem to indicate that in general a continuation of this rising trend in demand for Dutch dairy products can be expected during the year. And it is possible that only slightly higher volumes of milk will be diverted this year to production of butter and nonfat dry milk than in 1973.

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