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THE DAIRY SITUATION IN CANADA  
SUMMARY

OCT 13 1934

On September 10, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics issued in conjunction with the Report on Cold Storage holdings a summary of conditions in the dairying districts as they relate to butter production. The previous review pointed out that cold storage stocks of creamery butter were approximately 46 million pounds, showing an increase of 48 million pounds over the same month in the previous year. Feed and pasture conditions were found to be quite unfavourable, particularly in the Maritime Provinces, southern and western Ontario, south-western Manitoba and in extensive sections of southern and west-central Saskatchewan. Pastures were bare or rated as considerably below normal in all parts of the Dominion except in a few specially favoured regions where moisture was plentiful. Hay and other forage crops were considered to be insufficient to meet requirements in Nova Scotia, parts of Ontario and in Saskatchewan, where summer drought was most intense. Conditions in Quebec were reported as being much better than last year, British Columbia about the same, and in Alberta the situation was believed to be more satisfactory from a dairying standpoint than any of the other Prairie Provinces. On account of the poor pastures and the feed shortage in many districts, together with low prices for butter fat in comparison with other products, a reduction in the total creamery butter output during the fall and winter months seemed probable. This conclusion was supported by data supplied by crop correspondents, showing a decrease of 5 per cent in the condition of milch cows on pasture as compared with last year; a decrease of 6 per cent in the number of cows freshening in the fall; a 10 per cent reduction in the probable milk supply in the fall and winter; a drop of 21 per cent in the supplies of native hay; a reduction of 14 per cent in sheaf oats, hay and clover and 12 per cent less roughage available for winter use.

In the past month, late fall rains have been responsible for a very considerable improvement in pastures. In addition, a good second growth on stubble fields in the west has supplemented the depleted pastures in many districts. Thus the milk and butter production in September were materially increased and the seasonal decline postponed. This will probably continue into October and milch cows will go on winter feed in better condition. The improvement in pastures, and the forage supplied by late crops, has bettered the situation in Ontario. In Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, conditions are still reported below normal with indicated decreases in milk and butter production. The feed supplies in Quebec are greater than expected and pastures have improved. In Saskatchewan where drought was most intense, farmers are launching into dairying despite the crop failure, and apparently more cows are being milked than was anticipated. In New Brunswick and British Columbia conditions are about the same as last year. It is now believed that creamery butter production in Saskatchewan during the winter will exceed the output of last year. With stubble forage available, butter production throughout the west as well as in the east is above the September output of a year ago, but it is not considered likely that the butter production for Canada as a whole during the winter period will be quite as high as in the winter of 1933-34.

The report issued today shows a further increase in cold storage stocks of creamery butter. Holdings have now reached 53 million pounds, an increase of 11 million pounds over that of October 1st of last year, without including butter reported by new firms added to the list since March 1st. It should be remembered, however, that all of this amount should not be regarded as representing a surplus above domestic needs.



## COLD STORAGE STOCKS

On September 1st, 1934, the holdings of creamery butter stood at 50,433,021 pounds and dairy butter at 573,490 pounds. On October 1st, creamery butter rose to approximately 53 million pounds, and dairy butter to over 630,000 pounds. These holdings are 11 million pounds above the peak recorded on September 1st of last year and 13 million pounds above the holdings on October 1st, 1933. These figures, however, should be reduced by about 2 million pounds on account of creameries added to the list during the year, which were not reporting twelve months ago. The actual difference, therefore, is only 11 million pounds.

While the holdings reported above are quite high, it must not be assumed that the entire difference in stocks as at October 1st, 1934 compared with a year ago represents a surplus above domestic requirements. It is necessary to have large quantities in storage to meet domestic needs during the next seven months when production does not keep pace with consumption. Just what quantities are needed cannot be definitely determined in advance. On October 1st last year, storage stocks were 8 million pounds greater than the year previous but on May 1st of this year it was found that the actual surplus was only about 4 million pounds. With an increasing population and providing no great price increases occur, the country will need more butter than a year ago. While general pasture conditions have improved greatly in the last month, indicating that fall production should reach higher levels than formerly anticipated, yet it is not expected at this date that butter production in the next seven months will exceed last year's make. If it does not, a considerable proportion of this 11 million pounds may have to be drawn out of storage for local sale. The uncertainty of the weather in the face of limited winter feed supplies and the price of butter fat relative to other products, are the principal factors that have to be considered in calculating probable surplus supplies over and above domestic consumption.

### A REVIEW OF CONDITIONS REPORTED BY PROVINCES

With the co-operation of the Provincial Dairy Commissioners and the Agricultural Statisticians, information dealing with feed supplies, fall pastures and the probable production of dairy products during the fall and winter months in the different provinces is reviewed herewith.

#### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

The hay crop formerly estimated at two-thirds of the average is now reported to be less than that formerly expected. September continued dry so that the pastures that had become run down as the result of summer drought did not get a chance to revive. It is suggested that with a poor root crop and a low price for potatoes that farmers may consider feeding potatoes to stock. There has been a reduction in live stock numbers as a result of the shortage of feed, and milk production has fallen to lower levels. There was a decrease of 12 percent in the creamery butter make for August, and September will probably show a much greater decrease.

#### NOVA SCOTIA

The conditions in this province have not changed materially since the last report was issued. There has only been one rain to benefit growing crops during the month of September. In some sections there is still a shortage of water for live stock and other uses. On account of low moisture supplies, pastures are of little account and there is very little after-feed on meadows. Second growth alfalfa is appearing in some districts but there is a general shortage of pasture and green feeds. The feed shortage is particularly evident in the poor farming districts.

In such parts, the supplies of forage are probably 60 per cent less than normal. In the better farming sections, however, where the land is under cultivation, there will be sufficient feed to carry stock through the winter.

Milk and cream supplies for town and city use are below consumptive requirements. Milk which would ordinarily be used for making butter or for the production of concentrated milk products, is being sold in the fluid form. More butter is being produced than last year in the better farming communities where feed is available, but for the province as a whole, there is a most significant decline. The September make was 381,852 pounds, a decrease of 27.5 per cent from last year.

#### NEW BRUNSWICK

While pastures in this province have improved slightly in the course of the last month, the improvement is not likely to make any appreciable change in milk and cream production. The feed prospects are still unsatisfactory. Hay will be scarce in some sections, although in the St. John River Valley and specially favoured areas, a fair amount will be available for winter use. The root crop is below normal though the yield is estimated to be about the same or a little above that of last year. Corn is not an important crop in this province. The small amount grown will yield about the same as in 1933 but the quantity is not enough to be considered as a substitute for other feeds. Late-sown green crops will help out in supplying feed for early winter so that there may be enough to meet requirements. The production of butter in September is expected to be the same or a little below that of September of last year.

#### QUEBEC

There has been a marked improvement in pasture conditions in this province during the month of September. An abundant supply of moisture has greatly improved the aftermath of hay meadows which will afford ample pasturage in most districts during the remainder of the autumn season. The quantity of feed available for winter use is now believed to be about normal, as measured by the long-time average. Cows on pasture are in fair condition and production is being well maintained. The price of hay is quite attractive and farmers will take advantage of these high prices to sell any surplus which they might have on hand rather than to feed any extra quantities. Concentrated feeds are also high in price and on account of the low price of butter fat, farmers are not expected to purchase large quantities.

The receipts of milk and cream at dairy factories are about normal. This means that production will be well above last year's output, which, of course, was somewhat below average. Although the returns from dairy factories have not yet been received, the production of creamery butter, based on gradings, is estimated at 9,900,000 pounds, or about 15 per cent greater than last year. Cheese production is estimated at 3,600,000 pounds, a decline of 12 per cent.

#### ONTARIO

The improvement in the condition of pastures and meadows and the very fine growth of corn and root crops are the two outstanding developments in the feed situation during the past month. Most favourable reports are being received from western and southern Ontario, stating that frequent showers had greatly improved pastures and that stock is in a much better condition than it was a month ago. Second growth alfalfa and late-sown green feed have shown remarkable growth in recent weeks which will provide a partial substitute for hay. There is likely to be a shortage of hay for winter feeding, however, in southern and western counties where the crop was poor. Owing to the improvement in the supply of pasture and forage, the anticipated



reduction in the milk supply has been temporarily checked. Fodder corn and roots will help out in providing winter feed.

The output of creamery butter for September is expected to be about 2 per cent above that of the same month last year. It is believed that when the pastures are frost-killed, making it necessary to start stable feeding that the supply of milk will fall below the amount produced twelve months ago. The extent of the decline, of course, will depend upon the length of the winter, the severity of the weather and the quantity of feed required to maintain cows at a normal level of production. While there has been some improvement it is still believed that the shortage of hay and other feed crops in the dairying districts will restrict milk and cream deliveries.

#### MANITOBA

Pastures for this time of the year are very good with the exception of the south-western part of the province where drought conditions prevailed during the summer. In the judgment of most people, the relatively high price of grain will tend to encourage farmers to sell it rather than to feed additional quantities to dairy cows.

Receipts of cream and milk are about the same as in September last year and butter production for the month was 2,300,147 pounds compared with 2,051,501 last year, representing an increase of 12 per cent. Since so much depends on the weather and when the snow comes, it is difficult to forecast production tendencies for the balance of the fall season. An early winter would reduce milk and cream deliveries and it is possible that the feed shortage in certain sections of the province, combined with the tendency to sell the grain as a cash crop, may restrict production during the winter months. These, of course, are matters that can only be determined on the basis of subsequent events.

#### SASKATCHEWAN

In the face of an acute feed shortage, dairy production in this province has been well maintained. While the southern part of the province again suffered a crop failure, the area affected is smaller. On September 22nd and 23rd a heavy blanket of snow fell over the southern and central districts. At Regina eleven inches were recorded. This put threshing operations at a standstill and made it necessary to hold cattle off the stubble fields. With favourable weather, stubble forage will again be available for maintaining dairy stock. The feed shortage over the whole of southern Saskatchewan is quite serious and many dairy herds are being moved to northern areas. Little more than maintenance is provided for the stock left in the south.

Notwithstanding the feed shortage indicated above, it is surprising to find that milk production in the drought areas is quite high. This is reflected in a substantial increase in the output of creameries in these sections. In August there was an increase of 14.1 per cent in creamery butter production in southern Saskatchewan. A decrease was shown up to the first of May but from then on there has been an increase each month. For the eight months, an increase of 8.9 per cent is shown for the whole province. A gain of 23.3 per cent was registered in the north, and central districts showed a gain of 8.5 per cent. During the same period, creameries situated in the north came within one per cent of reaching the output of last year.

~~South~~  
Preliminary figures for September indicate that there will be an increase of about 10 per cent in creamery butter production. The snowstorm affected cream deliveries temporarily but if good weather continues, again permitting the stock to

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Errata, The Dairy Situation in Canada  
(issued August 12th, 1934)

Oct. 12/1934

Page 1 - Line 4

46 million pounds should read 48 million pounds

Page 4 under Saskatchewan  
Paragraph 2 - Line 9

North should read South

Page 5 under Alberta  
Line 14

20.2 percent should read 2.4 percent

Chief, Agricultural Branch.

run on the stubble fields, October production should be well above last year. A sharp decline in cream deliveries may be expected when winter sets in, but the indications are that the output for the calendar year will be considerably above 1933 and that winter production will exceed that of the previous season.

ALBERTA

The feed supplies in this province are sufficient to meet the requirements of dairy farmers except in limited areas in the south-east and north of the South Saskatchewan River where the moisture supply was rather scant during the growing season. The alfalfa was exceptionally good and in the irrigated areas particularly, a heavy tonnage was obtained. A larger acreage of fodder corn combined with a fair yield will help to relieve the feed shortage which exists in the southern districts. The snowstorm in the latter part of September made it difficult for stock on pasture, but with good weather following the storm, native pastures show signs of improvement and cows on stubble lands will have better forage. Recent rains and snow have also improved pasture conditions in the north and in the foothill country, so that the prospects for the next thirty days are rather favourable unless the cold weather sets in earlier than usual. With feed supplies almost as good as in 1933, it is proper to expect the production of dairy products to be equal to or even better than a year ago. The output of creamery butter for September was 1,985,000 pounds, an increase of ~~20.2%~~ 2.4%.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

With the possible exception of the Kootenay Valley and parts of the Island, the supply of forage might be considered fair or good. The hay crop on the lower mainland was quite heavy and the yield of alfalfa was above the average. Pastures showed the effect of hot weather in August but have since come back to normal. There will possibly be a little less feed available than was the case last year and with grain selling for a higher price, there may not be so much imported from the Prairies for feeding dairy stock. Poor prices for dairy produce have tended to reduce the production per cow and with higher feed prices this year, the situation will not be improved. For these reasons the output of dairy factories is not expected to be any greater than a year ago. The creamery butter make will possibly be about the same.



