

SA Dairymens Association History

27 April 1961.

The secretary stated that he had been directed by the Executive to prepare a report on licence suspensions as we had long felt that the present method was unsatisfactory and unfair and at the same time was quite ineffective in protecting the customer.

In addition, he had recently received a letter from the Milk board stating that they had now removed their self-imposed limit of 30 or so suspensions, in each month, with the result all producers below the board's standard would now be suspended.

Following a study of the NSW regulations he had devised a scheme for the Councils consideration which was a good scheme insofar as it does what should be done from a quality standpoint, but it did not seem possible to calculate what its effect would be on the average producer. The only practicable way to determine this effect would be to give the scheme a trial run in a factory.

Under the present scheme the supplier's milk was tested for one month and if during that period he had 3 out of 4 tests below 4 hours (with some qualifications) he was suspended immediately and not reinstated until he had 2 consecutive 4 hour tests.

The loss of city milk bonus whilst under suspension was definitely a penalty, not a discount for substandard milk, as the substandard milk had gone into city milk for a month and it was quite probable that the milk being supplied whilst under the present system did not prevent substandard milk from reaching the producer.

He now suggested a change in procedure as follows; any producer falling below 4 hours the normal test period be advised as soon as possible, which would not be through the post, but by telephone (which cost 4d. in many cases against 5d. for a stamp) or by return cans (which is done by some factories the following day, not 2 days later) or even by telephoning the driver to advise the farmers on his round. There would be objections to this on the score of unreliable drivers but surely there was a problem that could be overcome.

On the next day all milk from producers failing to achieve standard on the previous day would be segregated and not included in city milk and a further test taken.

If the test was ok, payment for milk would be made at licensed rate (even though it had not gone to the city, but if below standard it would be paid for at unlicensed rate, and this procedure of segregation and testing would be carried out each day until the milk stood up to test, at which time testing of that supplier's milk would revert to the normal routine of once in 8 days.

It was impossible to calculate what this would mean to the producers; whether the total penalty now suffered by producers under suspension would be more or less than the smaller discounts suffered by a greater number of producers under this scheme, undoubtedly with the Milk Board's new procedure a much greater number were going to suffer under the present penalty system.

The Chairman said that as we were now entering winter the milk board's new procedure would have little effect at present, but we should give a lot of thought to the Secretary's proposal in the near future, so that if we wanted to do anything we could approach the Board well before the warm weather. He believed that we should spend some time on it and perhaps take it back to the districts. Whether we adopt this scheme or not, we did not approve of the present system.

Mr. Turvey asked whether we could get some idea of the effect on the average producer.

The Secretary replied that there were no figures to show how many producers have had runeth. Blues on two consecutive days, and Mr. Taylor of the Milk Board had suggested a pilot run in one factory next summer, as there was no point in trying it out during winter.

Mr. Easton said that in some cases pressure had been brought on depts to take consecutive tests and the very thing that the Secretary mentioned had occurred, namely that a bad test was not inevitably followed by another failure.

Mr. Turvey said that in any case we should consider adopting the temperature compensated test right away, and should now be looking for a figure on which to base it, whether it was a mean temperature of 24 hours or what, and he moved:- "that the milk Board be asked to introduce a temperature compensated standard".

There was no Secunder to this motion.

Mr. Warick believed that we should not regard the problem for from the "Penaity" aspect; the bonus has provided for milk that would stand up-to test, yet there was no incentive to any farmer to raise his standard by such means as refrigeration.

Mr. Spicer said that we should not set the standard to the milk, but bring the milk up to standard, and this must be the principle on which any temperature compensated standard id calculated. Mr. McKenzie said it was not the maximum temperature that concerned us but the prevailing temperatures between milking and tipping, and a relatively low night temperature would have much greater effect than a high maximum day temperature.

Mr. Whitford said that the great advantage of the proposed scheme ws that whereas under the present scheme many suppliers felt they could relax their Standards now and again.

Mr. Spicer then moved - "that the Secretary's suggested scheme be further considered by the Executive Committee and its decision be submitted to the Central Council for action". Seconded by Mr. Warwick.

The secretary then asked whether, as the subject was a matter of policy, he should minute the discussion or whether it should be considered as being in camera.

Mr. Gormlie said t hat although it was resolved that it be considered by the Executive Committee, the Council had to make the final decision, and the Districts should be kept informed.

Mr. Edmonds then moved - "that the discussions be included in the minutes". Seconded by Mr. Easton and carried.