

Packing and Marketing Cheese

Joe Williman, Monroe, Wis.

It is my asperation, that a man in his capacity of work should do his best, also in part to his fellow workers, anything that might assist them in bettering the better work. Upon those principals, I base my talk to you.

Mr. Davis has so ably shown to you this forenoon, that by the present high prices of land we must do the most exhaustive farming. The resolutions adopted by the association this morning have partly taken the wind out of my sails at the same time they have backed my argument, because they have shown the very need of what I have to say.

Why I have chosen to talk on preparing cheese for the market, my past and present experience has shown me that it is the point that needs a decided improvement. My talk will therefore be more in the nature of a criticism than instructive form, with the intention to bring before you things that seem to be largely overlooked and neglected. You might question me, is there anything in the line of cheese that needs improvement, when cheese demands such fancy prices. I question you, can we maintain it without special effort. Comfirming my experience, I must say I started 35 years ago in the mother cheese country, Switzerland, very rude were the facilities and utensils in the line of cheesemaking when I began, but just the same we had a hatchet, a saw and drawknife, which has seemingly disappeared in many factories of today, judging by the looks of the boxes and tubs in the market.

It is necessary that we consider the copperage on account of the excessive freight we are paying. Boxes ranging from 16 to 24 pounds are a factor which mean dollars and cents, for example a carload of cheese of 250 boxes means a difference of \$60.00 in freight by using the heavier boxes, besides a box neatly trimmed will be a pound lighter and each tub from 4 to 6 pounds. The lumber mills dress all lumber for the market to save freight although it costs them cash money, but there is a saving. You pay your cheesemakers for good work, therefore it will not cost you any more if you insist on well made and trimmed boxes and tubs. The american cheese producers have us beaten, for they market as high as 64 pounds of cheese in a 5 to 6 pound box.

The dealers in Switzerland send their cheese all over to America in a package that weighs just one half as much as ours, and it is in better condition than many of the tubs and boxes when they leave the farmers wagon at our warehouses in this city. It being the workmanship that makes the difference. Fellow dairy men, the Wisconsin Dairy School has proven to us that we lose thousands of dollars a year, because we do not control temperature in making and curing cheese, and I prove that you lose hundreds of dollars by excessive freight paid on unproper boxing and tubbing, and if the cheese dealers among us feel like telling the truth, they must say that the packing and boxing are too often in a deplorable condition, and as the factories are better equipped and the trade demands neatness, we must produce a neat clean package.

My fellow country men, has it not appeared to you how nicely everything is put up now days to attract your eye and to give you a good opinion of the article therein and have you ever noticed a freight depot platform, when it was covered with merchandise ready for shipment and compared the workmanship as well as the lumber used in the different packages. I am sure that if you did you have noticed the remarkable difference in appearance. I have often seen it in

such light that the thought came to me, that if the intelligence of we Switzers is to be judged by the skill and workmanship we exhibit on our cheese copperage, it made me feel like denying my nationality.

It is my conviction that you farmers and milk buyers owe the present high prices for cheese to the keen competition in the cheese business. It is therefore, fair and essential that you do all in your power to assist the disposing of the cheese by producing for sale a first class article in a clean attractive package.

Fellow cheesemakers, I do not question your ability and knowledge of cheese making nor do I want to teach you anything in that line, as worthy State Dairy School with its force of experienced professors, instructors, commissioners and inspectors are trying the best to guide you toward economic and exhaustive cheese making, and the man that thinks he could not learn anything from them, gives himself a poor testimonial.

Coming to look at the cheese that is marketed in the spring and fall we find the fault with the so called soft cheese consisting of being sour, pasty, too young and wet, lack of salt and mould, which can all be overcome by any intelligent maker. I have seen such cheese go as far east as Philadelphia or south to Texas, and come back and sold for half what you originally received for it, with the freight both ways to be paid out of it, then can you expect the buyer to come back to you again with top prices under such conditions.

I have seen cheese refused on account of bad shaped cakes and to back my argument I have a sample here, would you buy that cheese, would you get a good opinion of such a looking cheese? Is it likely a man turning out such cheese has the characteristics of a successful and profitable cheesemaker to run factory for you farmers or milk buyers? Has not the time come where only approved, skillful men can be licensed to run your factory, which means dollars and cents every day? Any other manufactur-

ing concern will and must discharge poor workmen or it could not compete with its competitors.

Shall we tolerate workman who mar good raw material to such condition or refuse faults caused by careless neglect? Or shall we blame the cow because she gives such a lot of good milk? I say, No, there is no excuse. It only reminds me of what I witnessed once between a station agent and a railroad official, the agent had neglected some of his known duties, the official asked him did you know you must do so and so, the agent admitted yes, whereupon the official said: "Why in - - - didn't you do it."

Of course there are many first class cheesemakers who not only make good cheese but show fine workmanship on cheese and boxing and if you farmers must hire men, who do not know go thru the cheese dealers cellar and where you see fine workmanship in boxing and tubbing you see a good man every time, a man who has method and will operate your factory for the best under all circumstances.

To those upon which criticism rests, I would say, to use high temperature in spring and fall to coagulate the milk in making the cheese, maintaining the same in white-washed cellar, then mould and sour will disappear, carefully watch your salting process give it the time to cure and then when you come to the last stages, wrap and pack it neatly not too tight in a well trimmed box, in mailing it, remember you will save much provocation if the public do not lacerate their hands on the boxes or the poor laborer has to throw away one quarter of his cheese, which was blackened by a nail. Shall we blame the hammer?

When it comes to weigh this cheese do not forget that a well dried out box, going into the cellar, at say, 16-18 pounds will absorb 1-2 pounds cellar moist in a couple of weeks, then you should not credit that for cheese because the wind on the trip will steal it again, and your box will not hold out when it comes to the buyer, for that we can blame the wind, but it is hard on the buyers bank account. When your cheese is ready for the farmers wagon insists

that he has a clean wagon box or some clean straw therein and make him cover the boxes with a canvas.

If you follow these rules you will land in the hands of the public an article that will sell and call for more, which is the vital point for you gentlemen. And I will say once more, the public will and can demand a good clean article in the line of food. The Pure Food Commissioners are hard at work and in my opinion the time will come that cheese and butter in filthy packages will be condemned as unfit for food, then can you blame me for not giving you the hint sooner?

Gentlemen of this convention, if I have been personal in my talk or anyone felt guilty of what I said, I beg your pardon, as I have no such intention, as I meant to inspire you for the best of the cheese product, which was and will be the financial making of Wisconsin. All honor to the cheese craft.