

The Beginnings of Minnesota Dairying

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WHEN THE SUBJECT of dairying is mentioned today it is natural to think of Minnesota, for its farms and creameries have placed it among the leaders in that branch of husbandry. Were the subject being discussed in the 1860's, however, few would have thought of Minnesota in this connection. It was not until the 1880's that dairying really began to make strides in the state, and even then wheat attracted more attention. A glance at Minnesota dairying as it existed before the middle eighties should prove interesting, and it should also serve to highlight the development which has since taken place.

In 1850 there were recorded in Minnesota Territory, which included part of what is now the Dakotas, 607 milk cows, a figure that probably is not accurate. By 1860 the state had 40,444 cows, and in 1870 the figure was 121,467, an increase for the decade of slightly more than two hundred per cent. During the 1870's progress was not so rapid, for in 1880 reports showed 275,545 cows in the state. In general, as would be expected, there was a high correlation between the number of cows at any particular time and the production of butter, milk, and cheese. An exception to this, however, was the increase in the production of factory-made cheese during the 1870's, which was far more rapid than the increase in the number of cows.¹

Dairying, as carried on by the average farmer of the pioneer period, was primitive indeed. During the cold winter months all dairy products were at a premium, "But when the winter broke and the spring grasses started, in May, the old cow was expected to 'come across,' deliver a calf and start her flow of milk, which she did, and another season of corn meal mush and milk opened up." A dugout or cellar served as a milk room. The milk was set in shallow pans or earthen crocks, which were placed on racks or some cheap structure.

¹ For detailed figures on livestock, and on milk, butter, and cheese production in Minnesota from 1850 to 1880, see Edward V. Robinson, *Early Economic Conditions and the Development of Agriculture in Minnesota*, 103, 105, 244 (University of Minnesota, *Studies in the Social Sciences*, no. 3—Minneapolis, 1915).

After the milk had set, the cream was skimmed off, and the milk was fed to the family, the pigs, or the calves. The cream was placed in a dash churn and made into butter, a strenuous job.²

The quality of the butter produced varied greatly. Each farm wife seemed to have her own method of making the product, and the newspapers of the early period were filled with recipes for butter-making. Generally, however, the homemade product was of a low grade, and many women refused to learn better methods. In this connection, F. A. Richardson of Austin told members of the Minnesota Butter, Cheese and Dairy Stock Association in 1883: "I have not forgotten instructions given me more than twenty years ago by my employer while behind the counter. Said he, 'you may strike a woman's child, abuse her husband before her face, but *never* find fault with her butter,' and I have seen it illustrated. A young man attempted to test a crock of butter by smelling of it, when the woman gave him a slap on the back of his head of sufficient force to leave an impression of his smelling organ in the butter."³

When a supply of good butter was procured by a merchant, it often occasioned comment in the press. For example, in 1861 Watson and Eastman of St. Paul received a lot of excellent butter from Steele County, an incident which prompted one farm journal to remark: "We have seen so much poor butter in our market that we have sometimes half believed a superior article could not be made in our State. Not unfrequently have we purchased what the merchants would call a first rate article, which our women folks, who were brought up on Vermont butter, would not have on the table. No doubt most of what has been sent to our market has been made by women who knew but little, if anything, about the nice art of butter making."⁴

When butter was taken out of the churn, it was placed on a

² William G. Gresham, ed., *History of Nicollet and Le Sueur Counties*, 1:461 (Indianapolis, 1916); Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, comp., *History of Fillmore County*, 1:518 (Chicago, 1912).

³ Minnesota Butter, Cheese and Dairy Stock Association, *Third Annual Meeting*, 49.

⁴ *Minnesota Farmer and Gardener* (St. Paul), 1:199, 367 (July, December, 1861). A correspondent whose letter appeared in the issue for August, 1861 (1:241), complained that a great amount of unpalatable butter reached the St. Paul market. He said that cream should not stand more than eight hours after skimming before it was churned, and that "Butter should *never be washed*."

wooden tray and washed, worked, and patted with a hand ladle. Then it was salted and placed in a jar, to be kept for home use or taken to a store and traded at six to ten cents a pound for family necessities. Some women skimmed their sweet cream for butter, and some waited until the milk had turned to clabber. Many cellars and root houses in which milk was kept lacked ventilation, and the milk was often allowed to stand near decaying vegetables, all of which did not help the quality of the butter. Store owners as a rule paid a better price for good than for poor butter, but they tried to keep quiet about this practice. Customers soon became aware of differences in quality, and they asked for Mrs. So-and-So's butter. Often, however, all butter obtained would be mixed in a common container, the good with the bad, so that the customer had to take what he could get. The frontier stores of the 1850's and 1860's had no iceboxes and their cellars were not always the best. Sometimes a man would buy all the butter in a given store and throw it together. Then he would churn it in sweet milk, add other ingredients, and sell the resultant

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[From the *American Agriculturist*, 41:40
(January, 1882).]

product to cheap boardinghouses, No wonder some people detested the taste of butter.⁵

The experiences of one or two early farmers in the dairying business may prove enlightening. H. J. Brainard of Little Canada related some of his experiences in a letter written in 1869. From 1853 to 1868 he kept from forty to a hundred and fifty milk cows. For several years he experimented with feed. At first he used hay, which by 1869 he considered little better than oat straw. One fall he fed his cows white turnips, which later he believed were injurious to the animals. Finally he found corn fodder to be a fine winter feed, fourteen acres of drilled corn sufficing to feed forty head of cattle. By feeding his cows corn rather than hay he saved five to eight hundred dollars in a single winter, and his cows gave a larger quantity of milk. Brainard also fed his cattle barley grains from breweries, brans, and a mixture of a pint of corn to five pints of oats. He concluded that "dairy and stock farming, properly conducted, is a profitable business in Minnesota, notwithstanding the length and severity of our winters."⁶

H. P. Van Cleve, in a letter of March 8, 1861, from Long Prairie, told of his experiences, saying that the cows he reserved for family use the preceding summer furnished 650 pounds of butter, besides cheese, milk, and cream for from sixteen to eighteen persons. His butter alone paid for cutting and hauling hay for all his cattle and horses. "A careful estimate of the value of the increase of my stock, after deducting losses, has convinced me that I have realized from my cows fifty per cent. per annum, for four years," he estimated. He added that, "The losses referred to were four calves destroyed by wolves, about three years since; and during this winter one young cow drowned, and one gored to death by another; not one by sickness or poverty."⁷

At a meeting of the Farmers' Club of Glencoe on June 5, 1869, dairying was discussed. One farmer said he could put into his cheese vat milk from fifty cows at a cost of four cents a gallon. He esti-

⁵ Gresham, *Nicollet and Le Sueur Counties*, 1: 461; J. E. Townsend, "Store Business as Carried on in Belle Plaine 63 Years Ago," in *Belle Plaine Herald*, September 7, 1933.

⁶ *Minnesota Monthly* (St. Paul), 1: 56 (February, 1869).

⁷ *Minnesota Farmer and Gardner*, 1:131 (May, 1861).

mated the cost of keeping a cow at \$12.50 a year, and stated that she would give at least three hundred gallons of milk during that time. That amount of milk would produce three hundred pounds of cheese, which would bring twelve and a half cents a pound, or \$37.50. Whey and butter would be worth at least \$10.00 more, leaving a profit of \$35.00 a cow.⁸

But dairying was not easy. One pioneer recalled that he had to care for thirty-three head of cattle one winter and that it took nearly all day to do the chores. He had to carry hay from stacks to the cattle in the stables, and for water he had to drive them to a spring on a neighbor's farm.⁹

Just when the first butter was exported from the state is difficult to determine. From scattered notices in the press it is apparent that the amount sold elsewhere increased constantly after 1860. A St. Peter newspaper of 1861 reported that twenty thousand pounds of butter would be shipped from that community during the current season, adding that "Minnesota, by and by, will be able to butter the bread for five millions of people." In 1869, after the opening of the Union Pacific Railroad, parties from California were in the state buying butter for the California market. This was good news to Minnesotans, since in the East California competed with Minnesota in the wheat market.¹⁰ Generally speaking, however, the lack of a dairy market held back the industry until after 1870, or even later, and the local store remained the main market for any surplus a farmer might have.

The first record known to the writer of cheese marketed in St. Paul was in 1852, but this was evidently a small amount. In 1859 the *Glencoe Democrat* reported that a few citizens at that place had

⁸ *Glencoe Register*, June 10, 1869; *Minnesota Monthly*, 1:217 (July, 1869).

⁹ "Pioneer Days in Vernon Township," in *Hayfield Herald*, March 23, 1934. One writer asserted that private dairying meant doubtful profits, slavery for women, and annoyance and waste of time to the farmer and his help; another told of losing livestock from disease. Curtiss-Wedge, *Fillmore County*, 1:519; *Glencoe Register*, July 8, 1869.

¹⁰ The *St. Peter Statesman* is quoted in the *Farmer and Gardener*, 1:265 (September, 1861). See also the *Farmers' Union* (Minneapolis), August, 1869; Martin J. Anderson, *The Development of the Dairy Products Industry in Minnesota*, 1 (Minnesota Dairy and Food Department, *Bulletins*, no. 52 — Minneapolis, 1913). A shipment of dairy products from the Wells creamery to St. Louis is noted, with the prophecy that it might be the beginning of wonderful things for Minnesota, in the *Minnesota Farmer* (Minneapolis and St. Paul), 2:93 (December, 1878).

turned their attention toward the manufacture of cheese. Colonel John H. Stevens remarked at the time that it had been eighteen years since he had lived where cheese was made. Cows had been too scarce on the frontier for cheese making.¹¹

The first cheese factories in the state were established about 1868, when one at Owatonna attracted considerable attention. The plant was owned by Horton and Chase, and the superintendent was C. W. Richardson, late of Erie County, New York. The building measured thirty by forty feet, with a wing eighteen by forty feet that was used as an engine room. The boiler of a twelve-horsepower steam engine was used to heat two cheese vats, each of which held six hundred gallons. There was space for a third of the same size. The milk of six hundred cows, obtained within a radius of four miles, was used each day. The factory was conducted on a co-operative basis, each farmer receiving dividends according to the amount of milk he furnished. The proprietors received two cents a pound for making and selling the cheese, plus "all the butter which is obtained from the whey, by a new process." According to the *Minnesota Monthly* there was a big demand for cheese both in the United States and in Europe. "Dairy farming, properly conducted," advised the *Monthly*, "is everywhere prosperous, and is soon to become, we think, an important branch of Minnesota husbandry. We hope so." From 1870 on cheese factories multiplied rapidly, and within a period of less than ten years Minnesota cheese ranked with the best.¹²

The reputation of Minnesota butter, however, developed slowly, and butter factories were established later and less rapidly than cheese factories. As late as 1877 butter factories in Minnesota were considered something new. They were conducted on an associated plan. Milk was taken to the factories twice a day in cans, which were emptied and then refilled with sour milk for use on the farms. Among the state's earliest butter manufacturing concerns was the

¹¹ *Minnesota Pioneer* (St. Paul), July 29, 1852; *Weekly Pioneer and Democrat* (St. Paul), August 26, 1859.

¹² *Minnesota Monthly*, 1:233 (July, 1869); Anderson, *Dairy Products Industry*, 2, 51; Butter and Cheese Association, *Second Annual Meeting*, 28; Robinson, *Agriculture in Minnesota*, 81. Cheese factories were opened at Wells and Lake Crystal in the spring of 1872, according to J. A. Kiestler, *History of Faribault County*, 344 (Minneapolis, 1896), and Thomas Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 174 (Chicago, 1909).

Langdon Butter and Cheese Factory Company, which was organized in January, 1876, as a joint stock company at Cottage Grove. The building and apparatus cost \$4,500.00. Milk from two hundred cows was used during the first season, and fifty-two thousand pounds of cheese and three hundred pounds of butter were made and sold in St. Paul. It took nine and a half pounds of milk to make a pound of cheese and twenty-two and a quarter pounds for one of butter.¹³

Just as cheese and butter factories were being established in Minnesota, the dairy interests received a setback. In 1878 there was a big drop in dairy prices. Cheese fell to six and seven cents, and butter prices also dropped. Some blamed the decline on overproduction, especially of the common grades of cheese and butter, while others said it was due to the introduction of oleomargarine. Both factors, plus the depression of the 1870's contributed to the situation. The decline in prices hit the cheese business harder than it did butter-making. The production of cheese in 1880 was the smallest in ten years. In that year there were forty-nine cheese factories in the state, mainly in two regions. One group was located in Dodge, Olmsted, and adjacent counties, the heart of the early wheat belt, where diversified farming was being introduced. The other was in the region east of the Mississippi, where wheat raising never had been very successful. Few cheese factories were located on main waterways or near cities, for in such areas it was more profitable to market butter or milk. On the other hand, cheese could be produced in remote districts, since it was less perishable than butter or milk.¹⁴

As late as 1879 there were many complaints about the quality of butter. The *Minnesota Farmer* bemoaned the fact that it did "not know of a single dairyman in the state, who makes what is generally considered a first rate article." The highest price paid for local butter went to George Morrison of Fairvale Farm, Minneapolis, and yet his product brought only thirty-five cents a pound among "select consumers." Wells creamery butter retailed at thirty cents, and Langdon's

¹³ The articles of incorporation of the Langdon Butter and Cheese Association are printed in the *Stillwater Messenger*, November 12, 1875. See also *Statistics of Minnesota*, 1876, p. 151; 1877, p. 55 (Commissioner of Statistics, *Eighth and Ninth Annual Reports*—St. Paul, 1877, 1878).

¹⁴ *Minnesota Farmer*, 2:5 (September, 1878); *Statistics of Minnesota*, 1882, p. 26; Robinson, *Agriculture in Minnesota*, 83.

butter at about twenty cents a pound. In some other states, according to the *Minnesota Farmer*, butter was made that retailed at from fifty cents to a dollar a pound. Despite the low price paid for its product, the Langdon Butter and Cheese Factory was awarded the first premium for butter by the Minnesota Dairymen's Association at its 1879 meeting. With its entry, the factory submitted the following description of the method used in making its butter: "Skimmed the milk at thirty-six hours' setting; mixed the morning and evening cream together; let it stand twelve hours, stirring it often; and then churned; temperature of churning-room, thirty-eight degrees; time of churning, forty-five minutes; draw off the buttermilk; work the butter until the water is quite clear, then place the butter upon the worker and press gently with the lever until the butter is level; then add seventeen ounces of salt to twenty pounds of butter; then work until it grains right; pack in tubs directly from the worker, the result of each churning."¹⁵

W. A. Van Styke of St. Paul, who was said to handle more butter than anyone else in the state, estimated that Minnesotans produced five hundred pounds of poor butter to one of really good butter. It was difficult to induce the average farmer to improve the quality of his butter; yet the same farmer often thought that the butter buyer was trying to cheat him. One man, whose butter was extremely poor, said to a buyer at Owatonna: "You get lots of poor butter here; you go around to the stores and buy it and send it to Minneapolis and St. Paul and get forty cents a pound for it, and make thirty cents a pound; you are rich and I am poor and hardly make enough to buy my clothes and poor clothes at that!" In justice to the farmers, it should be pointed out that many buyers obtained unsalted butter at low prices and mixed it with Wells-Richardson's butter coloring, the staple article used from "ocean to ocean" for making white butter an even yellow color.¹⁶

Despite low prices, malpractices, and poor products, the dairy in-

¹⁵ *Minnesota Farmer*, 2:153, 226 (February, May, 1879).

¹⁶ Butter and Cheese Association, *Third Annual Meeting*, 60; *Statistics of Minnesota*, 1880, p. 40 (Commissioner of Statistics, *Twelfth Annual Report*—St. Peter, 1881); John A. Brown, *History of Cottonwood and Watonwan Counties*, 1:197 (Indianapolis, 1916).

terests of the state were on the march by the late 1870's. One evidence of their development was the organization of associations to stimulate the industry. In 1878 the Minnesota Dairymen's Association was organized, and in 1882 the Minnesota Butter and Cheese Association had its inception. The growth of dairying was due not only to natural evolution from the 1850's, but also to the fact that wheat farming was becoming increasingly unprofitable in some of the older sections of the state. Exhortations to farmers to diversify their agriculture appeared in the press almost as soon as the territory was organized, but the number of appeals increased rapidly after 1870. Farmers, however, were slow to adjust to new conditions until a change became absolutely imperative. Dr. E. C. Cross of Rochester, in an address of welcome to members of the Butter and Cheese Association in 1882, said: "Our lands are not seeded with grasses for hay and grazing, barns and comfortable stables unbuilt, and secure yards unprovided. We have not cows enough to make dairying profitable, and are generally ignorant of the best breeds and grades for milking uses. Much time and capital are necessary to convert the grain into a livestock farm. The change must be made slowly; yet we feel that the time is at hand when many of the grain elevators on the line of our railroads must give place to stock yards, and cattle cars become more common on the great lines of transportation from the Northwest."¹⁷

Slowly but surely economic forces, plus the efforts of enlightened and prosperous farmers, wrought the transition from wheat raising to dairying. Azro P. McKinstry of Winnebago City was sometimes described as the "first creamery man, perhaps in the State." In December, 1880, he proposed that if the farmers would bring in their cream he would do the churning. That was continued until spring, when he sent out teams of his own to gather cream. At first the farmers did not respond well, but as time went on their interest heightened, and by 1883 McKinstry's cream route extended as far as eighteen miles from Winnebago City. He kept sixty to seventy-five head of Holsteins and Jerseys, and raised only enough grain for his own use.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Minnesota Farmer*, vol. 1, no. 7, p. 4 (March, 1878); Butter and Cheese Association, *First Annual Meeting*, 3-9, 12.

¹⁸ Butter and Cheese Association, *Third Annual Meeting*, 22-26; *Illustrated Album of Biography of Southwestern Minnesota*, 685 (Chicago, 1889).

By the summer of 1883 there were more than seventy creameries in successful operation in Minnesota, and their products were known in the markets of New York and Boston. In 1884, when Mower County had four creameries in full operation, the benefits derived from them were the subject of comment. Eastern and foreign epicures were said to "readily pay forty and fifty cents per pound" for creamery butter, which they preferred "to the time-honored 'country butter' we used to brag about at an inferior price. Time was when 'farm butter' was king, but since the advent of creameries the product of the home dairy has lost caste, and cannot compete with the more modern article in quality nor price. A few years since the good farmers' wives of Mower County were glad to realize six to eight cents per pound for their butter, after performing all the labor of milking, caring for the cream, churning, packing and delivering at the store counter."¹⁹



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[From the *American Agriculturist*, 41:136
(March, 1882).]

number of inches of cream in the container. The can was so built that one inch of cream when churned would produce one pound of

¹⁹ *History of Mower County*, 154 (Mankato, 1884); Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 193; Butter and Cheese Association, *Third Annual Meeting*, 20; *Preston Republican*, November 1, 1934.

No longer did the farmer have to take his milk and cream to the skimming station or cheese and butter factory. All he had to do was set the milk aside in cans furnished by the creamery. By 1880 the best can was that known as the "shot-gun can." It was eight-teen to twenty inches high and eight inches in diameter, with a glass gauge on one side to show the num-

butter. The farmer of the early 1880's usually received fifteen to eighteen cents for each inch of cream. As in other fields, however, the farmer was slow to use new equipment, and pans and crocks were not uncommon in 1880 and later.²⁰

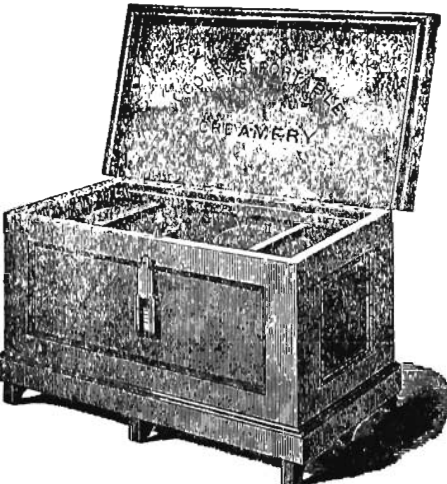
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[From the *Minnesota Farmer*, vol. 1, no. 9, p. 20 (May, 1878).]

The age of mechanization in the dairy business was still in the future. At the meeting of the Butter and Cheese Association in 1882 the following products and articles were on exhibit: Ashton's Imported Dairy Salt, Higgin's Eureka Imported Dairy Salt, a dairy tank, Peerless Butter Color, Perry's Concentrated Butter Color, June Golden Butter Color, Calkin's Milk Cooler and Creamer, Haney's Creamer, P. S. Mont's Ventilated Cooler, a tin and wood butter package, a cream gauge, a transportation cream can, Bennett Brothers' Butter Worker, a combined milk and cream strainer, cooler, and setter, C. C. Buell's Graduating, Self-Ventilating Milk Can and Cooler, a barrel churn, the Belle City Feed Cutler, Hewe's Air Pressure Creamer, a square box churn, the Davis Swing Churn, and a new process linseed meal. None of the articles listed represented any-

²⁰ "Farmers of Locality Operated Skimming Station Years Ago," in *Independent* (Parkers Prairie), February 8, 1934; *History of Mower County*, 154; Gresham, *Nicollet and Le Sueur Counties*, 1:463.

thing more than an improvement over primitive hand methods.²¹ The De Laval cream separator, invented in Europe in the late 1870's and the Babcock cream tester, perfected about 1890, did not appear in Minnesota until late in the century.

Since there was no scientific method for testing the butterfat content of cream, disputes between farmers and creamerymen were frequent. Some farmers thought that creamerymen were getting rich by cheating the farmer; others devised methods for cheating the creameryman. Cream would be filled with air by stirring it, or it would be kept until it was sour, which would make the butterfat content appear greater than it actually was. In their defense creamerymen said that sometimes they had men on a route of thirty-two to thirty-four miles collecting cream at a wage of two dollars a day who might come in with only sixteen to eighteen inches of cream; and one man said that in 1882 it cost him six cents a pound to gather cream. In the early 1880's some Minnesota creamerymen adopted the Schoch and Bolender system of testing cream. It consisted of "taking a half inch (56½ cubic inches) of each patron's cream, churning and weighing the butter by itself, thus determining the amount of butter he should be paid for."²² After adopting this system, both farmers and creamerymen seemed better satisfied. In this connection it should be remembered that the early creameries were private or joint stock concerns. Co-operative creameries, for which Minnesota now is famous, had not yet appeared.

By 1882 the breeds of cattle most commonly found in the state were Shorthorn Durham, Jersey, and Ayrshire. There were some Herefords, a few Polled Angus, and some Devons, but only a very few Holsteins. Much strife, some of which was personal, arose between owners of various breeds, especially Shorthorns and Herefords. Leading dairymen contended that to be profitable a cow must give at least five thousand pounds of milk a year, an amount sufficient to make

²¹ Butter and Cheese Association, *First Annual Meeting*, 94. Cooley's Portable Creamery, which was manufactured at Northfield, is described and advertised in the *Minnesota Farmer*, vol. 1, no. 9, p. 2, 20 (May, 1878), where it is claimed to be economical and a labor saver.

²² Anderson, *Dairy Products Industry*, 2; Butter and Cheese Association, *Third Annual Meeting*, 52-54, 85; "The Danielson Creamery and Its Fortieth Anniversary," in *Willmar Daily Tribune*, July 29, 1930.

about two hundred pounds of butter. Too many "blizzard cows" were to be found — cows that would stand ill treatment and adverse weather conditions, but would not produce enough butterfat to be profitable. Furthermore there were too few cows, only two and a half per farm in 1883. In that year General N. C. McLean of Frontenac advised farmers to raise Jerseys if they were going into the butter business, Holsteins for butter and cheese, and Shorthorns for beef.²³

Certain nationality groups were closely identified with dairy enterprises. Swiss settlers developed the cheese industry, and the Danes tended to go into buttermaking. The latter particularly established themselves in a leading position in the Minnesota dairy industry by their pioneer work in the Clarks Grove vicinity. During the early 1880's agriculture in that area was carried on in much the same manner as it was in other communities. Then in 1884 Hans Peter Jensen, a Danish immigrant of 1865, made a visit to Denmark, an event which was to be of great significance to the future of dairying in Minnesota. In his homeland he found that the dairy industry had made remarkable strides since he left for America, and that it was far in advance of the industry in Minnesota. In 1882 a co-operative dairy was established at Hjedding, Jutland, and from there the co-operative movement spread over Denmark. This development greatly impressed Jensen, who "made it the subject of many conversations with his friends" when he returned to his adopted home. In 1890 his work and that of his friends bore fruit when the famed Clarks Grove creamery, one of the first co-operative creameries in the state, was organized.²⁴

Some of the men interested in developing dairying deserve special mention. In addition to McLean, McKinstry, and Jensen, there were

²³ *Statistics of Minnesota*, 1876, p. 149; 1882, p. 26; *Minnesota Farmer*, 2:231 (May, 1879); Butter and Cheese Association, *Second Annual Meeting*, 15, 19; *Fifth Annual Meeting*, 30, 34. It was estimated that the average yield in Minnesota was eighty pounds of butter annually for each cow owned in the state.

²⁴ Floyd Sorenson, "The Development of a Co-operative Community — Clark's Grove," in *Evening Tribune* (Albert Lea), July 7, 9, 1934; Thomas P. Christensen, "Danish Settlement in Minnesota," *ante*, 8:368; Everett E. Edwards, "T. L. Haecker, The Father of Dairying in Minnesota," *ante*, 19:155-157; *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 18, 1915; Mary C. Swain, "Early Cooperative Creameries in Minnesota," 9. The latter item is a term paper prepared at the University of Minnesota in 1930; the Minnesota Historical Society has a copy.

Charles E. Marvin of Rochester, J. M. Thurston of Redwood Falls, H. M. Burchard of Marshall, G. W. Van Dusen of Rochester, Oren C. Gregg of Lyon County, W. C. Rice of Goodhue, Moses Hutchinson of Owatonna, Samuel Deering of St. Paul, and C. H. Chadbourn of Rochester. This list is not exhaustive, but it includes some of the most articulate and active proponents of dairying. Deering, for example, operated a seventy-five acre dairy farm about a mile and a quarter west of St. Paul, which was worth about \$45,000.00. Between 1867 and 1879 in St. Paul he sold milk worth upwards of \$125,000.00, an average of about three barrels a day. He owned a hundred and twenty head of stock—a herd valued at \$10,000.00. On his place were three barns, one of which was for his purebred Shorthorns, and he employed four men.²⁵

The bugbear of the dairyman was oleomargarine. In 1884-85 leading commission men estimated that four million pounds were sold in Minnesota. The legislature of 1881 passed a law providing that all packages of counterfeit butter should be marked with the word "oleomargarine," but it neglected to appropriate money to carry the law into effect. Hence it was a dead letter. The addition of water to milk was another problem for the dairyman, and as a result a law was enacted on March 5, 1880, "to prohibit and prevent the sale or manufacture of unhealthy or adulterated dairy products." Less than a month later the law providing for a state dairy commissioner went into effect. Then on November 11, 1886, the Minnesota supreme court, in the case of Butler vs. Chambers, upheld the law prohibiting the sale of adulterated milk and butter substitutes. Minnesota was the first state to prohibit such sales.²⁶

But evidence of the success of the state's dairy interests was to be found in places other than legislative halls and court chambers. In the winter of 1884-85, at the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition at New Orleans, Minnesota won the highest award

²⁵ Anderson, *Dairy Products Industry*, 18; *Independent Farmer and Fireside Companion* (St. Paul), 164 (November 1, 1879); Butter and Cheese Association, *First Annual Meeting*, 3, 15-19; *Statistics of Minnesota*, 1876, p. 150.

²⁶ Minnesota State Dairy Commissioner, *First Biennial Report*, 5, 8, 13, 15, 20, 43, 56 (St. Paul, 1887); Theodore Christianson, *Minnesota, The Land of Sky-Tinted Waters*, 2:134 (New York, 1935).

for a display of dairy products, including the "grand sweepstakes" for the best butter and the "grand diploma of honor" for an educational exhibit. What satisfaction this award must have given such men as Charles E. Marvin and O. C. Gregg!²⁷

The New Orleans award was symptomatic in that the future lay rather with the butter than with the cheese producers, although factory cheese production led factory butter production until 1885. One writer has given eight reasons for the victory of butter over cheese: There were few Swiss in the state; Minnesota farmers, interested in enlarging their herds, were raising young stock, and for feeding it they needed skim milk, a byproduct of butter; the early leaders of the university school of agriculture encouraged butter rather than cheese factories; the school also favored butter production because of the feeding value of skim milk; New York and Wisconsin had become leaders in cheese production; cheese was bulkier in relation to its value and more expensive to transport than butter; the mechanical separator favored the development of butter; and the fact that cheese had to be cured caused returns to be slow in reaching the farmer.²⁸

By 1885 dairying had become an extensive Minnesota industry. There were sixty-three creameries and forty-six cheese factories in the state, and the dairy farmer had become something of a political power. Ten years later a leading St. Paul journal proclaimed that "The most remarkable feature in the recent development of the State of Minnesota is beyond doubt the progress made in the dairying industry." That progress would not have taken place had not the pioneer farmer and his wife laid solid foundations upon which the later dairyman, equipped with the De Laval separator and the Babcock tester, could build. The frontier farmer, striving at first to provide dairy products for his family and later producing a surplus for an expanding market, had placed Minnesota on the threshold of a development which was to make it one of the most productive and progressive dairy states in the Union.²⁹

²⁷ Butter and Cheese Association, *Fifth Annual Meeting*, 13; Christianson, *Minnesota*, 2 :133.

²⁸ Christianson, *Minnesota*, 2 :134; Anderson, *Dairy Products Industry*, 16.

²⁹ *Statistics of Minnesota*, 1878, p. 38; "Dairying in Minnesota," in *Northwest Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, vol. 14, no. 11, p. 26 (November, 1896).



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