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Research in Dairying—A Survey

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Changes in Milk Production in Great Britain during the Past Half-century

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Organization of the industry at the beginning of the century

The producers of milk and dairy produce at the beginning of the century and up to the twenties could be grouped into a series of zones. This was necessitated by the comparatively primitive methods of handling and transporting milk, and also to a considerable extent by the consumers' prejudice against milk that had been cooled and delayed for more than a few hours in its progress from the cow to the breakfast table.

Cows were kept in many towns and large cities, so that milk could be delivered quickly, and be handed to the consumers fresh and warm from the byre. Often the only land attached to the 'town dairy' was an exercise yard, or paddock, so that no pasturage or arable crops were available, and all food had to be bought. This necessitated a steady supply of purchased hay, straw and roots, as well as more concentrated feeding-stuffs, and also a ready market at all times of the year for the manure. Thus, the system survived longest in the towns where, within easy carting distance, there was land well suited for arable cultivation, with farms ready to sell farm crops and to buy back manure.

The system also required the constant renewal of the cow population because breeding or rearing of stock was rarely attempted. Newly calved cows of a dual-purpose type were bought and milked as long as they continued to give a satisfactory yield. They were fed heavily, and by the time the yield of milk had dropped to about 1 gal./day, they were sold for slaughter as fat cows and replaced by new purchases. I need not say anything about the objections on the part of the health authorities to the keeping