PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALITIES OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTERSTATE MILK SHIPMENTS

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It is necessary to look backward as well as forward in understanding the purpose of this Conference. The basic objective of the Conference is to facilitate interstate shipments of milk, through mutual understanding and confidence in sanitary requirements. States are sovereign powers. Each is constitutionally charged with a moral obligation to serve all its citizens in matters of common good, more especially in our case, public health. The moral obligation connotes also the service be efficiently performed. This Conference is a means of bringing delegated officials of the sovereign states together to discuss a specific mutual problem. It is a voluntary Conference. It is designed to meet the needs of those states where interstate shipments of milk is desired and necessary. It is a Conference whereby states can transfer milk supplies by agreement.

This Conference already has established a working agreement of methods facilitating interstate shipments of milk. The agreement has been used advantageously by a significant number of states. It is particularly designed for the mutual needs of voluntary participating states and communities. Such mutual agreement should not and need not be misaligned nor deprecated by non-participants.

The National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments was conceived in response to a developing need. In the meeting of the Conference of State and Territorial Health Officers in April 1943, it was requested that the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service do what he might to facilitate interstate shipments of milk. Subsequently, and in stages, and solely through mutual exploration of the problem, this Conference came into being. The difficulty of interstate movements of milk, one of the nation’s most important components of food supply, has been the subject of discussion and study for many years. There have been a number of factors that have high lighted a need in facilitating movement of milk from area to area. The interposition and demands of a war caused a terrific expansion in milk production as well as in milk processing facilities. The necessity of procuring and translocating over extended periods large supplies of milk and milk products made very clear the need for improved methods of evaluating its quality on an interstate basis. The postwar period has been accompanied by changes of direct concern to the dairy industry, and to matters in public health. These may be listed as follows: (a) There has been a great shift in population growth rate. It is becoming clear that currently the rate of increase in population is greater than that of total food produced. It would appear that this may be true for a long period of time. Plenty can shortly become poverty, in food. Agriculture already is under forced draft treatment of machinery, fertilizer, and insecticide. (b) There has been a shift in population intensity in many areas. (c) Modern concepts in nutrition requires food from various sources; few areas today are self-sufficient in terms of nutrition requirements and must rely on processed supplies. (d) Legislative stock piling and pricing not only of milk fat and dry milk solids-not-fat, but other foodstuffs as well, has affected industry economy in various ways; the ramifications in terms of public health are numerous. (e) There has been a constant and significant extension of soil conservation practices coupled with extension of dairy production and processing facilities. Areas formerly deficit in milk have become areas

NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF IAMFS

Please, notice letter by H. L. Templeton, Chairman, Membership Committee, on page XIII, please, fill out questionnaire (page XIV) promptly and mail as directed.

FORTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING
HOTEL BON AIR — AUGUSTA, GEORGIA, OCTOBER 4 - 6, 1955
with assets of milk. Areas formerly importing milk, today export milk. Coincidentally, few state areas exist in the country today that cannot, or do not, export milk or milk products across state lines. (f) Modern government, and the services of government, are costly. Increasing requirements for tax money simply highlights the problem of costs of food. Food cost is directly a matter of public health. Availability of food is related to its cost. With ever increasing percentages of non-food producers, for the many, food cost is of paramount concern.

Other developments have had their impact on the means by which the basic food supply, milk, can be trans-shipped from one area to another. Among these may be cited: (a) A decision of the Supreme Court denying a community the right arbitrarily to delimit its supply of milk to a geographically delimited area, (b) The development and establishment of 3A sanitary standards for design of dairy equipment, (c) Critical surveillance of various agencies on matters relating to interstate shipments of milk, particularly relating to food costs and public health. The Committee on Administrative Practice of The American Public Health Association has requested study of this problem by its Committee on Interstate Acceptance of Milk at various times during the past 10 years. This Committee only recently recommended principles in conformity with those of this Conference. The National Research Council and The United States Department of Agriculture sponsored a study on Sanitary Milk Control and Its Relationship to the Sanitary, Nutritive and Other Qualities of Milk of eight major cities. The study indicated need for only a limited number of basic requirements to insure a wholesome milk supply, and cited the conditions of greatest importance in rating evaluations.

This Conference began in response to a need; a need for simplification of the mechanics for transstate movement of milk. The tools by which milk could be evaluated for movement were available. The problem of the Conference was, and is, efficiency in the use of the tools for mutual needs.

During, and shortly following the war period, multiplicity of survey and inspection of milk supplies was common. Surveys have indicated that prior to development of the National Conference plan, it was not uncommon to find certain producing areas and processing plants subject to as many as twenty-five different community and state evaluations. This is equivalent to an inspection every two weeks. Frequently, there existed diametrically different interpretations of basic concepts of sanitation, and public health, in the making of these evaluations. Obviously, there existed confusion, at cost. Multiple evaluation cannot be done without cost to someone, ultimately to the consumer. More recent surveys (since the Conference has been in operation) have indicated the extent of multiple inspections to be greatly reduced, and more uniform interpretation of public health concepts achieved.

The immediate objectives of this Conference are several fold; (a) to provide a forum for mutual understanding and resolving the problems of interstate movement of milk supplies, (b) to enable a meeting of person as well as mind of those mutually interested in and dealing with interstate movement of milk supplies, (c) to reduce the work load of health and regulatory officers of mutually participating states in the job of procuring and the cost of evaluating the quality of milk supplies, (d) to facilitate immediate procurement of qualified milk supplies, and (e) to have at hand current evaluations of milk supplies available for trans-shipment.

It is proper to re-evaluate the benefits of this conference. They are several:

1. Every citizen in this country can and does have access to high quality milk at any time and place.
2. It enables more economical and efficient use of public health personnel and assigned monies for supervision of public health. It is interesting to note that in a survey among state groups participating in the Conference Agreement, reduction in expenditure of funds and time of personnel was invariably cited as a real fact.
3. It allows for improvement in the quality of dairy products other than bottled fluid milk. Municipalities can expand the basic sanitation program into related products, and into geographically located areas otherwise not provided with good milk.
4. It helps maintain supplies of milk of desired quality for potential periods of undetermined shortages. It is as important to public health to maintain a source of quality milk as it is to utilize it.

Although this Conference has been in operation several years, to the mutual advantage of its participants, there exist a number of problems that need attention. These are as follows:

1. There is need for better understanding and use by participants in the specific mechanics by which shipments of milk are certified, identified, and reported. This is basically important to the Conference in that the agreement should be uniformly followed.
2. Prevalence of disease in dairy cattle is a major public health and food supply problem. There is need for improved understanding of the aspects of disease prevalence, its measurement, and its control. There is need of interstate understanding of control programs of and by veterinarians.
3. There is need for better understanding of the objectives of the Conference. Experience has shown that participants to the Conference can use its procedure in principle even though there exist apparent differences in prevailing standards. The agreement stipulates the use of a standard of evaluation or its equivalent. Actual participants to the agreement have had no hardship in this understanding.
4. As in all methods of appraisal, there is need for better uniformity in methods of rating evaluation. The U. S. Public Health Service was requested to make, upon call, evaluation ratings to minimize the variances potential in human interpretation. Continued effort in this direction can be expected to be very beneficial. It is important to note that the publishing of the ratings of milk supplies is fundamental to the continued use of the Conference agreements, and which all participants should support.
5. The manner of conducting this Conference is of great economic, as well as public health import. It
is necessary, therefore, that any decisions or conclusions, especially those involving mechanics in the use of the Agreement be based on thorough and exhaustive study, rather than on hasty improvised examination.

6. There is great need for extended understanding by health officers, sanitarians, the dairy industry, and by the public, in the objectives and activities of this Conference. This can be achieved only by full use of the educational facilities available to us.

Unfortunately, the concept of the interstate agreement has not been as thoroughly adopted in the intrastate area as it has been in the inter-state area. This is currently a major problem of this Conference. A Conference on Intra-State Milk Shipments has been organized in Wisconsin to help facilitate movement of milk from community to community within the state. The principles of the Interstate Conference Agreements are adaptable and definitely useful for local state work.

While the problems of the Conference are many, the objective, "Better and more milk for all the people," is a worthy one.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON APPLIED LABORATORY METHODS—1954

This year, in place of reviewing the literature on all phases of interest to the membership, it was decided to select a small number of topics and attempt to deal with them more intensively. It was intended that more attention be devoted to chemistry and food than in the past, but in this the Committee were only partially successful. A Sub-Committee was set up to deal with each of four topics: the reports of each Sub-Committee follow.

COLIFORM STANDARDS FOR PASTEURIZED MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

In reviewing possible subjects for investigation by the Applied Laboratory Methods Committee, it was recognized that the problem of coliform organisms in dairy products might be considered as one of the Sub-committee topics. As a result, a Subcommittee for the investigation of Coliform Standards for Pasteurized Milk and Milk Products was appointed with the following Committee members: C. K. Johns, W. K. Moseley, J. C. Olson, J. C. McCaffrey, G. W. Shadwick and F. W. Barber, Chairman.

It was realized that a study of coliform standards could not be accomplished in one year. Hence, it was felt that the activities of the Subcommittee should be extended at least for a two or three year period. During the first year we have attempted a general survey of coliform standards for pasteurized milk and milk products. Rather than conducting a nation wide survey at this time, we have concentrated first on the areas represented by the various Subcommittee members who were asked to supply the following information:

1. What are the coliform standards for various dairy products in your area?
2. In your experience how well do the various dairy products meet these coliform standards in your area?
3. Are there any specific problems which deserve special consideration?

It was suggested that for the present we consider milk, cream, chocolate milk, buttermilk, cottage cheese, and ice cream. There may be other dairy products with which many have had some experience and which might be included in our report. Perhaps the best approach to the problem would be to consider the frequency that various products do not conform to any coliform standard. Any information concerning the reason for nonconformance would undoubtedly prove of interest.

To date, information has been received from three Provinces of Canada, the states of Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, North Carolina, New York and New York City. Similar information is being obtained from six New England States and seven cities. Results are not available at this writing. In addition, the National Research Council Bulletins No. 121 and 250 covering Sanitary Milk and Ice Cream Legislation in the United States and Sanitary Milk Control and Its Relation to the Sanitary, Nutritive, and Other Qualities of Milk, respectively, were reviewed very carefully for mention of coliform standards. Our progress is of a preliminary nature and can be summarized in Table 1.

The National Research Council survey shows that only eight of the forty-eight states and fifteen of the eighty-four cities have coliform standards for milk. For ice cream only one state and two cities indicated coliform standards. In most instances the coliform standards were 10 per ml.

A summary of the comments received indicated that the greatest difficulty in coliform tests occurs with products of low volume such as cream. Here the problem appears to be an increase in count with the holding of the product a number of days. Some investigators believe that a standard of 10 per ml. is too lenient, especially if the presence of organisms in a pasteurized product means post-pasteurization contamination. Others indicated that the occurrence of atypical colonies on certain media and with certain products.

Tentative plans for next year's work by the Committee include the following:

1. Further extensive survey of coliform standards and compliances based on the questionnaire used for the New England area this year.
2. Review of the significance of coliform tests as based on the results of this survey.

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1 Presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Association of Milk and Food Sanitarians, Inc., at Atlantic City, New Jersey, October 21-23, 1954.