STATUS OF USE OF THE PROGRAM OF CONFERENCE AGREEMENTS IN INTERSTATE SHIPMENTS OF MILK

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Although the program of the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments was initiated some eight years ago, and some six National Conferences have been held in furtherance of its objectives, there has been to date no summary evaluation of the extent of its use. The constitutional procedure of the Conference program does not provide mechanics by which either the numbers, frequency, origin, destination, nor amounts of the shipments can be recorded for summary tabulation. In a previous study of this subject (1) it was ascertained that in virtually all states no provision existed whereby either the originating or received shipments were tabulated, or summary information about them recorded. It was apparent, in the current study, that extensive use of the program was being made through official knowledge and approval of shipments in origin and in receipt, and through numerous requests for survey ratings. Participation in the program is evident from the observation that the Conferences regularly have been attended by 150 to 250 persons, including 20 to 30 regulatory people representing the various states in official delegation of the Conference procedures. The current list of sources of milk in the "Sanitation Compliance Ratings of Interstate Milk Shippers" (2) includes approximately 580 dairy plants in 34 states and the District of Columbia. Participants to the Conference, including state and local regulatory agencies, and industry and educational groups obviously expend considerable sums of money in furtherance of the Conference program. One of the prime objectives of the Conference program is to reduce the costs of procurement of quality milk in interstate shipment. The U. S. Public Health Service currently is investing heavily in the making of survey ratings upon request of the states, and in the periodic publication of the list of sources having compliance rating.

In the light of need for information, the Executive Board of the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments, approved at its interim meeting in Augusta, Georgia on October 7, 1955, the making of a survey to ascertain the extent of use of the Conference program by the survey method. A questionnaire was developed having only but few specific objectives: (a) determination of the numbers of shipments actually made according to the procedures of the program; (b) establishing information on the amounts of milk shipped, and the periods in which it was shipped in the year 1955, and for the year 1954; and (c) commentary on the program.

PROCEDURE

A questionnaire, subsequently described, was accompanied by the following statement, and sent to the plant manager of every plant in the lists of plants with sanitation compliance ratings under date of January 1, 1956.

July 10, 1956

To the Manager of the plant listed in the U. S. Public Health Service Report of January 1, 1956.
Dear Sir:

"The National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments has been in operation since 1950. Through this program, receiving

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areas are provided with ratings of potential milk supplies in other areas. The last quarterly list issued by the U. S. Public Health Service contained the ratings of 457 dairy plants located in 34 states and the District of Columbia. The use of the Conference Agreements has facilitated reciprocal approval of interstate transfer of milk."

"The extent of use of the Conference Agreements has never been determined. A great deal of effort, time and money is regularly invested by industry, government and educational groups in the reciprocal agreement program for interstate shipment of milk. It is essential that the use of the program be known in the light of the effort invested in it."

"The Executive Board of the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments has requested that such an evaluation be made. A Committee has been assigned this job. It is, therefore, submitting to each plant listed in the U. S. P. H. S. report of January 1, 1956, and designated as a source of approved milk, a brief questionnaire. Your plant is listed in this report."

"Three answers are sought in this questionnaire to determine the use of the program in 1955: how many separate interstate shipments were made; in what months were they made; and how much milk was shipped? From the replies, the results of the work of the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments should become known."

"A concise questionnaire is attached to this letter. The Committee will appreciate your filling it in promptly so that it may report the facts to the Board, and to the next Conference to be held in April, 1957. The information in the replies will be used only as in a consolidated report. If there should be desired information about interpreting the questions, please write to me for further clarification. Thank you for your cooperation."

Sincerely,
For the Executive Board
National Conference on Interstate
Milk Shipments

A total of 196 replies were received. In a large number of instances the individual replies represented the collective data of several of the operating divisions of an organization. Reference to the compliance list indicates a large number of multiple plant organizations. An appraisal of the responses indicates the replies included an estimated 60-70 per cent of the plants to which the questionnaire was submitted. In a few instances involving significant groups of plants, information specifically was withheld on the basis of correspondence apparently for competitive reasons.

The questionnaire form, with a summary tabulation of the data provided in the 1956 replies is presented as follows:

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTERSTATE MILK SHIPMENTS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Your plant is listed in the report of the U. S. Public Health Service, under date of January 1, 1956, as having milk available for shipment in conformity with the Agreements of the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments. The information presented in this questionnaire is needed in order to determine the extent of use of the Conference Agreements in Interstate Shipments of Milk. Your assistance in filling out the questionnaire and returning it will be very much appreciated.

**Question 1.** Please write in the following table the shipments of milk made in accordance with the Interstate Milk Shippers' Conference Agreements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month in which shipment was made</th>
<th>Number of shipments made in the month</th>
<th>Total pounds of milk shipped in the month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>44,973,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1,633</td>
<td>42,071,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1,726</td>
<td>46,585,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1,827</td>
<td>43,740,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1,563</td>
<td>41,497,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>1,574</td>
<td>40,476,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1,928</td>
<td>49,970,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>2,610</td>
<td>77,416,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>3,458</td>
<td>95,050,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>2,941</td>
<td>79,500,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>2,777</td>
<td>76,543,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>2,136</td>
<td>59,508,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, 1955</td>
<td>25,627</td>
<td>697,333,966</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month in which shipment was made</th>
<th>Number of shipments made during entire year</th>
<th>Total pounds milk shipped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20,856</td>
<td>488,809,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULTS**

A total of 86 replies of the 196 received provided data on shipments made in the year 1955. A total of 110 replies indicated no shipments were made in 1955. All but 9 of the plants that shipped milk in 1955 also shipped milk in 1954. Only 2 of the plants that did not make shipments in 1955 made shipments of milk in 1954. The range in numbers of shipments made per month during 1955 was from 1,563 to 3,458, representing a volume of milk ranging from 40,476,000 to 95,050,000 pounds. The total number of shipments in 1955 was 25,627 and the total pounds of milk represented was 697,333,000.

A number of the replies received included data of intracompany shipments of milk across state borders. This information was not included in the list tabulations as representing interstate shipments. A number of replies indicated that both raw milk and bottled pasteurized milk was shipped locally intercompany and intracompany across state borders. These data likewise were excluded from the tabulations.

The survey questionnaire requested further information on, (a) the effect of the Conference program on frequency of inspection of milk supplies, (b) on costs
of inspection work, and (c) upon the inspection services of the company organization.

Twenty six of 93 organizations responding to the question indicated that frequency of inspections had been reduced, and that multiple inspections of various regulatory agencies had decreased. Twenty eight organizations indicated frequency of inspections had not decreased. In a number of the latter instances several factors were cited as qualifying the responses: (a) in the period indicated (specifically 1955) there had occurred a great shift from individual patron to bulk tank hauling of milk from farm to plant along with increased production of milk on the farms necessitating considerable supervisory work by both plant and regulatory sanitation services; (b) the mere consolidation and expansion of Grade A milk production and processing facilities had required even an increase in inspection activity; (c) although plants were listed as having compliance ratings, several receiving areas required approval of the shippers supplies by one or more of various specific local area city or state agencies thus involving multiple inspection; and (d) a very significant number of the responses indicated no change in frequency of inspection had been involved because the inspection previously regularly had been made by city or state agencies which had continued to be the basis of acceptance in the specific export market.

Eleven replies indicated specifically that costs of inspection work had been reduced through use of the Conference program, and 21 indicated there had been no change in inspection costs. Two replies indicated the program resulted in better quality milk, four cited improved definition of responsibility for quality in their organizations, and three cited greater efficiency in inspection work through use of the program. Others indicated no change, or offered no comment, to the question.

A very surprising result of the sending of the questionnaire to the managers of the plants was the development of a large number of inquiries as to the meaning of the program of the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (3) (4), what its procedure was, and how it functioned. This may have been due in part to continuing change in plant management personnel not otherwise informed by a parent organization. On the other hand, the inquiries were directed by several executive officials of organizations having at least several plants on the compliance list. Presumably the latter should know about the functions of the Conference. There appears to be an area of considerable scope in which informative work of the aims of the Conference better can be made known. This needs the assistance of all people interested in interstate milk shipments.

**Summary**

In the year 1955, at least 25,000 shipments of milk were made according to the agreements of the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments. The shipments accounted for transfer of 697 million pounds of milk. In 1954 at least 20,000 shipments were made representing 488,000,000 pounds of milk.

**References**