

THE BUTTER INDUSTRY IN THE UNITED STATES

An Economic Study of Butter and Oleomargarine

BY

EDWARD WIEST, A. M.

*Instructor of Commerce and Economics, University of Vermont
and State Agricultural College*

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE

FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

THE dairy industry has not yet received the attention from the student of economics that it deserves. The wealth that flows from this industry in the form of butter, cheese, and milk, to say nothing of by-products, make it one of our principal agricultural interests.

The conversion of milk into butter and cheese has caused manufacturing industries to grow up which present important economic problems. The butter industry, especially, has a history deserving a much more prominent place in our text-books on economic history than has thus far been given to it. The market organization presents problems that are of current interest. Among these may be mentioned the attempt to control prices by methods peculiar to the butter industry. The subject leads the investigator into the complex problem of the relation of the production of butter to the production of other food products. Considerable attention has been given to this phase in the chapter on the geographical distribution of butter production and in the chapters dealing with oleomargarine. The study shows that the ambitious youth may find an industrial environment in the rural districts quite as interesting and stimulating as that of urban centers. A great deal of dairy legislation has been enacted for the protection of the public health and for the prevention of fraud. An analysis of the conditions leading up to this legislation, however, reveals the fact that the dominating force behind the movement was not ethical but economic.

In connection with this study the author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Prof. Henry R. Seager for making valuable suggestions and criticisms, and to Prof. Edwin R. A. Seligman for his kindly encouragement. Acknowledgment is also due to Mr. F. G. Urner, Vice-President of the Urner-Barry Company, New York City, for assistance on matters pertaining to the market. Finally the author wishes to express his gratitude to his wife for the assistance she rendered in preparing the manuscript for the printer and for her general sympathetic support.

EDWARD WIEST.

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