

A SURVEY OF MILK PURCHASING  
IN COSHOCTON, OHIO

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This study was suggested by milk distributors of the city and was planned by the Department of Rural Economics and the Department of Dairy Technology of Ohio State University. The home visits by which the data were obtained were made by members of the Junior Women's Club of Coshocton.

The aim of the study was to find how purchases of milk and other dairy products were divided as to sources of purchase, the factors which caused them to vary and the attitude of purchasers with respect to changes in number of home deliveries and variety of products carried on delivery routes. Each person interviewed was asked to give amounts purchased each week under normal conditions.

Schedules were taken at 587 homes in areas so distributed over the city as to make this a representative sample as to levels of living.

## Sources of Purchasing Milk and Other Dairy Products

Following a classification used in previous studies in Columbus, Canton and Dayton, the grouping as to source of purchase was: (a) those buying through home delivery only, (b) those buying at stores only, (c) those buying in the country only and (d) those buying at two or more places or from multiple sources.

In Table 1 milk purchases in the 587 homes are analyzed both from a family basis and from a per capita basis. It is significant that in these 587 families there were 17 that made no purchase of fresh milk in the week that the survey was made. The number of families buying in the country is small and the averages are therefore, subject to greater influence by a single family. It is of interest that by far the highest per capita purchases were in the 6 families with children who purchased in the country.

Table 1 - Classification of Milk Purchasers Based on a Normal Week by Source of Purchase in 587 Homes in Coshocton, Ohio

|  | Home Del. Only | Store Only | Country Only | Multiple Source | No Milk Purchase | Total |
|--|----------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|-------|
| Number of families.  | 363            | 152        | 13           | 42              | 17               | 587   |
| Weekly purchases, quarts.                                      | 3435           | 1129       | 146          | 476             | 0                | 5186  |
| Qts. per week per family.                                      | 9.5            | 7.4        | 11.2         | 11.3            | 0                | 8.8   |
| No. persons all families.                                      | 1119           | 447        | 37           | 161             | 36               | 1800  |
| Daily av. purchases per 100 persons, quarts.                   | 43.8           | 36.3       | 56.8         | 42.2            | 0                | 41.2  |
| No. families, all adults.                                      | 199            | 101        | 7            | 18              | 17               | 346   |
| No. persons in adult families.                                 | 480            | 236        | 14           | 57              | 36               | 827   |
| Weekly pur. adult families only.                               | 1411           | 601        | 48           | 156             | 0                | 2216  |
| Daily av. purchases per 100 persons, quarts.                   | 42.1           | 36.4       | 49.0         | 39.1            | 0                | 38.3  |
| No. families with children.                                    | 164            | 51         | 6            | 24              | 0                | 241   |
| No. persons in families with children.                         | 639            | 211        | 23           | 104             | 0                | 973   |
| Weekly purchases of families with children, quarts.            | 2024           | 528        | 98           | 320             | 0                | 2970  |
| Daily av. purchases per 100 persons in families with children. | 45.2           | 35.7       | 60.9         | 44.0            | 0                | 43.6  |

The effect of children in the family upon the rate of milk purchases is clearly shown in Table 1. It was not possible to compute the rate of consumption of children apart from adults but the average per capita purchase of milk was 14% higher in families with children than in those composed of adults only.

The tabulation of cream purchases on the same basis as that given above for milk shows a different pattern. There were 17 families who purchased no milk; there were 400 of the 587 that purchased no table cream in the week the survey was made. The 187 families who did purchase cream are classified as to source of purchase in Table 2. There was a slight difference in distribution between home delivery only and store only but hardly enough to be significant. The striking contrast was in the difference between families with adults only and those with children. The per capita purchase of cream as such was much higher in the families with adults only than in those with children.

This difference may be due to the fact that many families pour the cream from the top of the milk bottle for coffee and other uses. In families with children the milk purchases ran higher and then there was an opportunity to use this method to advantage. There may also be some effect from differences in family income. The number of families that purchased cream in the country or through multiple sources was so small as to take away the value of the averages for comparison with the other classifications.

Table 2 - Classification of Cream Purchases by Source of Purchase

|  | Home<br>Del. Only | Store<br>Only | Country<br>Only | Multiple<br>Source | No Cream<br>Purchase | Total |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Number of families.  | 140               | 41            | 4               | 2                  | 400                  | 587   |
| Weekly purchase, $\frac{1}{2}$ pts.  | 385               | 95            | 12              | 7                  | 0                    | 499   |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ Pts. per week per family.                                    | 2.75              | 2.32          | 3.00            | 3.50               | 0                    | 1.02  |
| No. of persons-all families.   | 415               | 122           | 9               | 5                  | 1249                 | 1800  |
| Daily av. purchases per<br>100 persons, $\frac{1}{2}$ pts.                 | 13.2              | 11.1          | 19.0            | 20.0               | --                   | 4.0   |
| No. families all adults.   | 88                | 28            | 3               | 1                  | 226                  | 346   |
| No. persons in adult families.   | 217               | 66            | 6               | 2                  | 536                  | 827   |
| Weekly purchases of families<br>of adults only, $\frac{1}{2}$ pints.       | 250               | 57            | 10              | 4                  | 0                    | 321   |
| Daily av. purchases per<br>100 persons, adult families, $\frac{1}{2}$ Pts. | 16.4              | 12.3          | 23.8            | 28.6               | 0                    | 5.6   |
| No. families with children.  | 52                | 13            | 1               | 1                  | 174                  | 241   |
| No. persons in family with<br>children.                                    | 198               | 56            | 3               | 3                  | 713                  | 973   |
| Weekly purchases of cream, Pts.  | 135               | 38            | 2               | 3                  | 0                    | 178   |
| Daily av. purchases per<br>100 adults and children.                        | 9.7               | 9.7           | 9.5             | 14.3               | 0                    | 2.6   |

Butter purchases were made at stores to a much greater extent than were those of milk and cream. When purchases were separated for families with children and compared with adults only, there was found a somewhat higher per capita rate of purchase for adults but the difference was not as great as in the case of cream. The distribution of butter purchases is given in Table 3.

When records were taken as to actual rate of purchase the housewives were asked to make an estimate as to the amounts they would have purchased had the

products been available at all times and it had not been necessary to surrender ration points in order to obtain them. The city, because of its size, was not required to operate under the restrictions of War Order No. 79.

Table 3 - Classification of Butter Purchases  
by Source of Purchase

|  | Home<br>Del. Only | Store<br>Only | Country<br>Only | Multiple<br>Source | No Butter<br>Purchases | Total |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------|
| Number of families.  | 87                | 375           | 16              | 9                  | 101                    | 587   |
| Weekly Purchases, Pounds.  | 112               | 480           | 22              | 18                 | 0                      | 633   |
| Pounds per week per family.  | 1.29              | 1.28          | 1.41            | 2.03               | 0                      | 1.08  |
| No. persons, all families.   | 267               | 1166          | 38              | 25                 | 304                    | 1800  |
| Daily av. purchases per 100 persons, all families, lbs.              | 6.0               | 5.9           | 8.4             | 10.4               | 0                      | 5.0   |
| No. families, all adults.  | 44                | 218           | 11              | 5                  | 68                     | 346   |
| No. persons in adult families.                                       | 107               | 535           | 22              | 12                 | 151                    | 827   |
| Weekly purchases of adult family, pounds.                            | 54                | 254           | 12              | 9                  | 0                      | 329   |
| Daily av. purchases per 100 persons in adult families, lbs.          | 7.3               | 6.8           | 8.1             | 10.4               | 0                      | 5.7   |
| No. families with children.  | 43                | 157           | 5               | 4                  | 33                     | 241   |
| No. persons in family with children.                                 | 160               | 631           | 16              | 13                 | 153                    | 973   |
| Weekly purchases of families with children, lbs.                     | 58                | 226           | 10              | 10                 | 0                      | 304   |
| Daily av. purchases per 100 persons in family with children, pounds. | 5.2               | 5.1           | 8.9             | 10.4               | 0                      | 4.4   |

The product most widely affected by wartime restrictions was butter. Of the 587 housewives interviewed, 97 said they would have purchased a total of 88 pounds more of butter had it always been available and not rationed. About one-sixth of the families would have purchased slightly less than one pound more each week. Cottage cheese was next in importance. The answers to this inquiry are given below in Table 4.

Those interviewed were asked why they preferred the source from which their purchases were made. The answers are classified in Table 5

The second inquiry was with respect to continuing every-other-day delivery after the end of the war. There were 402 families in the survey who took all or a part of their milk purchases on home delivery. Of these, 327 or 81 percent said they would be satisfied to receive milk every-other-day, 53 or 13 percent said they would not and 22 did not commit themselves.

It would appear that at the time of the survey approximately four out of five of the persons interviewed would be willing to have these two market simplifications continued after the war. It remains to be seen whether the percent that dissents is large enough to have an upsetting effect upon the distributing programs of dealers in the market and whether these attitudes will remain the same when war restrictions are removed.