



# Stratford Co-op Dairy Factory

**Cloten Road**

**1890**

<b>Use:</b>	Business – TRC offices	<b>Historic Value:</b>	3 out of 5
<b>Materials:</b>	Galvanized concrete, iron roof	<b>Architectural Value:</b>	- out of 4
<b>NZHPT Registered:</b>	Not registered	<b>Technical Value:</b>	- out of 2
<b>Legal Description:</b>	Lot 5 DP 14095 - Subj to R/W DP 14922	<b>Symbolic Value:</b>	1 out of 3



<b>Rarity Value:</b>	- out of 2
<b>Townscape Value:</b>	- out of 2
<b>Group Value:</b>	- out of 2

**Overall Heritage Value: 4 out of 20**

In 1890, the Stratford Co-Operative Dairy Factory (which was described as a 'modern' factory) was opened by Messrs Robin and Pierard, as a forerunner to the present Cloton Road factory. On March 6 1894, the factory was purchased by the Stratford Farmer's Co-operative Association, with a capital of £2,000. Operations continued until May 1898, when the factory was destroyed by fire. The directors rebuilt the factory on a site further east, where the present factory stands.

In the company's first annual report for the year ending September 30 1895, while Mr. H.D.C. Marr was manager, it was reported that the company had become "*the most complete factory on the coast*". The factory had been increased to be able to cope with over 5,000 gallons of milk per day, and had received 443, 831 gallons of milk in the last season – which then produced nearly 400,000 pounds of cheese and 37,000 pounds of butter.

In 1901, Mr. J.F. Batey took over as manager, a position which he maintained until 1911. He was respected by everyone, and was a man who constantly sought to improve the quality of the dairy products.



*Stratford Dairy Company*

The Stratford Dairy Factory experienced a period of growth and improvements – in 1899 the company erected a creamery at Skinner Road, in July 1902 it took over the Toko Dairy Factory from the Crown Dairy Co. (which increased the Stratford capital from £5,000 to £10,000) and purchased the site for the Gordon Road Creamery. In 1903 the company purchased the Mukuri Road Skimming Branch, and it opened the Robson Road Creamery in 1905, meaning that by the early 1900s Stratford had taken over most of the Crown Properties. Stratford Dairy Factory also won

numerous prizes around this time – including the Egmont A&P Trophy 1896, Lovell and Christmas Challenge Trophy 1900, and winning the North Island Competition in 1902 and 1904.

In March 1902, the company began to supply pasteurised milk, which was seen as a novelty. However, the venture was not successful, ending in the next year with a deficit of £190. At the end of this year, the company's second fire burnt out the Skinner Road Creamery, with the directors deciding to rebuild it immediately. With so many wooden buildings, fire was a constant danger, and the company experienced a number of losses, especially in later years. However, the buildings were always, without delay, rebuilt.

In July 1907, the company ordered a combined churn and butterworker. By April 1910, the J.B. MacEwan & Co. made an offer that the company could have a three month trial of a motor lorry. The lorry weighed three tons, had a 35 horse-power engine, and cost £850 to be delivered.

The Stratford company first ventured into casein manufacturing at Toko in 1913, but it was not until 1924 that a second branch, the Skinner Road branch, started to manufacture casein also. This proved to be successful, owing to the fact that WWI sent casein prices soaring, and the venture was continued.

By the time the depression hit, the Stratford Dairy Company had costs that had increased far beyond what they had ever reached. In 1931, wages were reduced by 10%, and there was a large decrease in produce prices. However, prices slowly improved, and the industry got back up on its feet. By the 1950s, everything had stabilised, and the company spent a large amount of money in thoroughly modernising the plant and machinery, including purchasing a modern boiler house.

On 1 July 1958 Pembroke merged with Stratford, and, after voting in favour of amalgamation in September 1964, Stratford, Cardiff, Eltham and Normanby formed the Taranaki Co-operative Dairy Company in June 1965. They were joined by Mangatoki and Kaponga in 1966, and Ngaere and Midhirst in 1973.

The factory closed down in the 1990s. It was then refurbished, and is now used as the Taranaki Regional Council Offices.



*TRC Offices (formerly Taranaki Co-op Dairy Company)*

## **Bibliography**

Church, Ian; *The Stratford Inheritance*, The Heritage Press (1990)  
Stratford Co-op Dairy Diamond Jubilee  
Stratford District Centenary: 1878-1978