

# Dairying in the creamery era

Steam engines powered the creameries.

Farmers delivered their cans of milk to the creamery by horse and cart.

Most creameries were not refrigerated so sometimes bad butter was made from cream that had gone sour.

Creameries only operated for about 15 to 20 years—they were made obsolete by on-farm separation of cream using small hand-turned separators.

# Mechanical revolution: factory separators

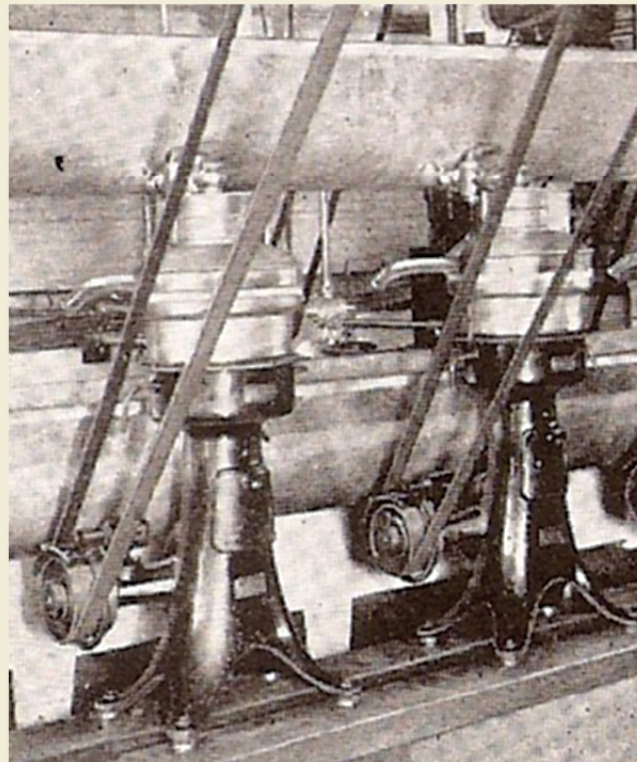
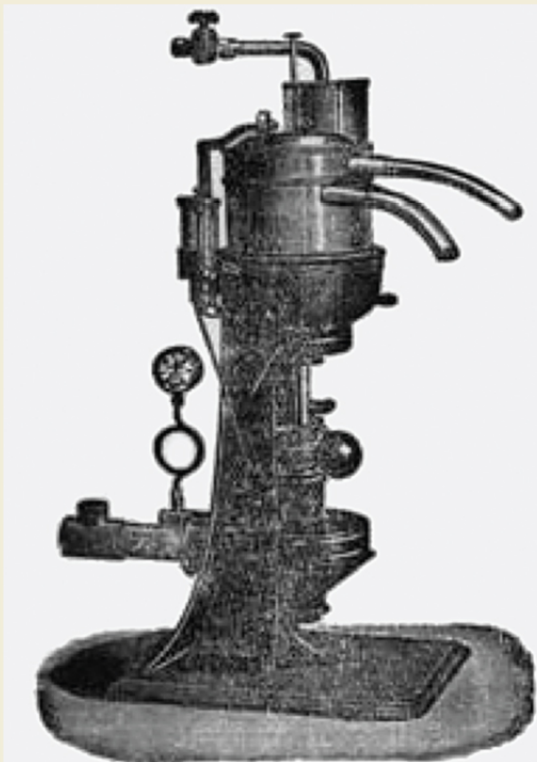
The first separators came to Australia in 1882.

They were machines that used centrifugal force to separate cream from milk.

Previously farmers had to put milk in settling pans overnight and skim cream off the top the next day. It was a laborious and wasteful process.

Now farmers could bring their milk to a local creamery to be separated.

The first separators were large machines that needed a steam engine to power them. They were too big and expensive for use on individual farms.



**Left: an 1898 De Laval factory separator. Whole milk flows into the separator through the pipeline at the top. The machine was driven by a belt attached to a steam engine.**

**Right: two De Laval factory separators. Whole milk flows into the separators from the trough above.**



# Camden Park's creameries

During the 1890s Camden Park operated four creameries.

They were at the Home Farm (Belgenny), Cawdor, Menangle and Westbrook (now Mt Hunter).

At Home Farm (Belgenny) the 1820s coach house was converted to a creamery in the 1898 by adding a second storey and an elevated water tank.

Cream from the four creameries was churned into butter at Menangle Central Creamery.



**Menangle creamery**



**Cawdor creamery**



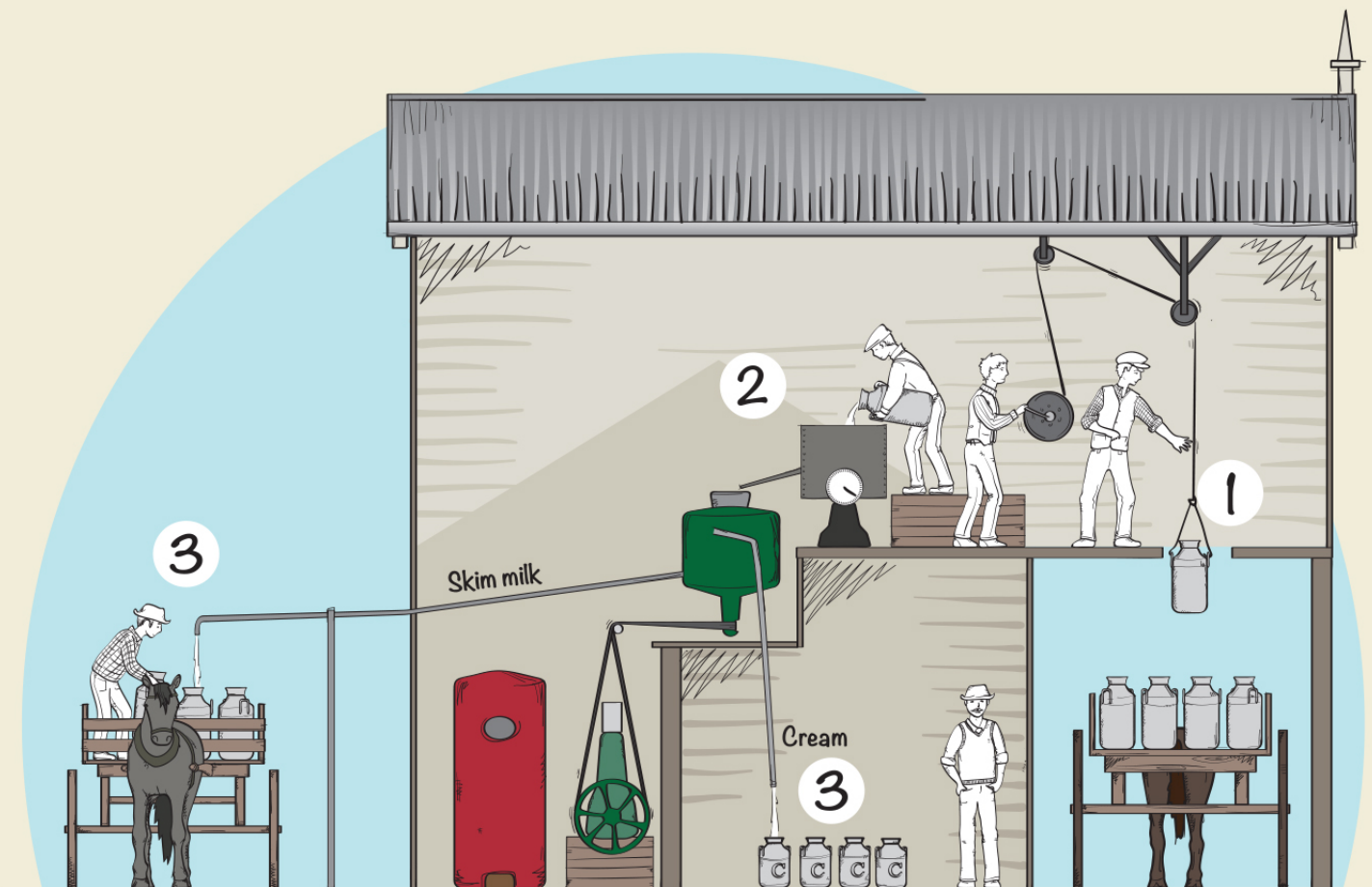
**Mt Hunter creamery in 2014**



**Home Farm (Belgenny) creamery**

# How a creamery works

1. Milk cans are winched to the top storey from carts underneath.
2. Milk is tipped into a vat and weighed.  
It then flows into a separator.
3. Separated cream and skim milk is stored in cans for transport.



# Mechanical revolution: farm separators

By 1900 many farms used small, affordable separators that were turned by hand and did not need an engine.

Farmers could now deliver cream to the factory rather than bulkier whole milk. They could also keep the skim milk on their farms to feed to pigs.

By the end of 1900 nearly half of the cream churned into butter at Menangle Central Creamery came from farmers with small separators. By about 1910 creameries were obsolete because of in-farm separators.





# Pigs and skim milk

Pigs were an important part of the dairy industry because they earned extra income for dairy farmers.

Pigs were fed the skim milk which remained after the cream was separated.



**Above: a skim milk cart on Camden park Estate in the early 1900s. It took skim milk from the creameries to feed the pigs in the Estate.**



**Pigs eating windfall fruit in the Camden Park orchard. They were also fed on skim milk from the Estate's creameries.**



# Marketing revolution: the Camden Vale Inn Milk Bar

In 1939 the Camden Vale Inn Milk Bar opened on the Hume Highway (now Remembrance Drive) at Camden.

It was built and operated by Camden Park Estate as an innovative way to promote Camden Vale milk to travellers on the highway.

It was an excellent, early example of integrated marketing and value-adding of farm produce.

It was the first drive-through facility in the district. Customers could get a milkshake while in their cars. It also served Devonshire teas with scones and jam. It was a forerunner to service centres on major motorways.

It is now a hotel-motel called the Camden Valley Inn.



# Delivering milk to the creamery

We ran our milk to the factory (Cawdor Creamery), backed the horses (and dray) in and the manager let the chain down, we hooked the 11 gallon can on and they were wound up ... the milk tipped into a large vat ... (and it was) separated up there ... the cream (was) sent to a butter factory at Menangle ... the skim milk ran through the building to a 400 gallon tank at the back. We washed the cans in a wooden trough and turned them up side down over a short steam pipe and steamed them ... went round under the skim milk tank and took home separated milk for the pigs.

Source: Memoir of A Doust (1886-1972) of Cawdor, Camden Park Share farming family



Creamery at Menangle. Source: Camden Historical Society.