

# Bay Milk bounces back

**Earthquake-struck Bay Milk factory at Edgecumbe could be back in business by August or September.**

The aim is to be processing "at least a significant proportion of our skim milk" on the site early in the 1987-88 season, says chief executive Mr Warren Larsen.

Some milk may have to be processed by other companies at the peak.

Mr Larsen says Bay Milk Products is well-insured against material damage and consequential losses. Company management is confident that shareholders' returns will not be reduced.

Even as investigation into the damage was progressing and badly hit buildings were being demolished, a company planning team was looking at options for redevelopment on the site. Early indications were that rebuilding there is the most economic option.

Mr Larsen says the considerable structural damage appears to be mainly to older buildings. Several are being demolished.

## Escaped

Though initial impressions may have been that the factory was flattened, 11 major buildings look in reasonable condition.

The foundations for a new casein factory appeared from preliminary inspection to be little affected.

Extensions of a third line in the ultrafiltration factory are likely to continue.

The steam generating energy centre and the milk reception area seemed to have escaped serious damage.

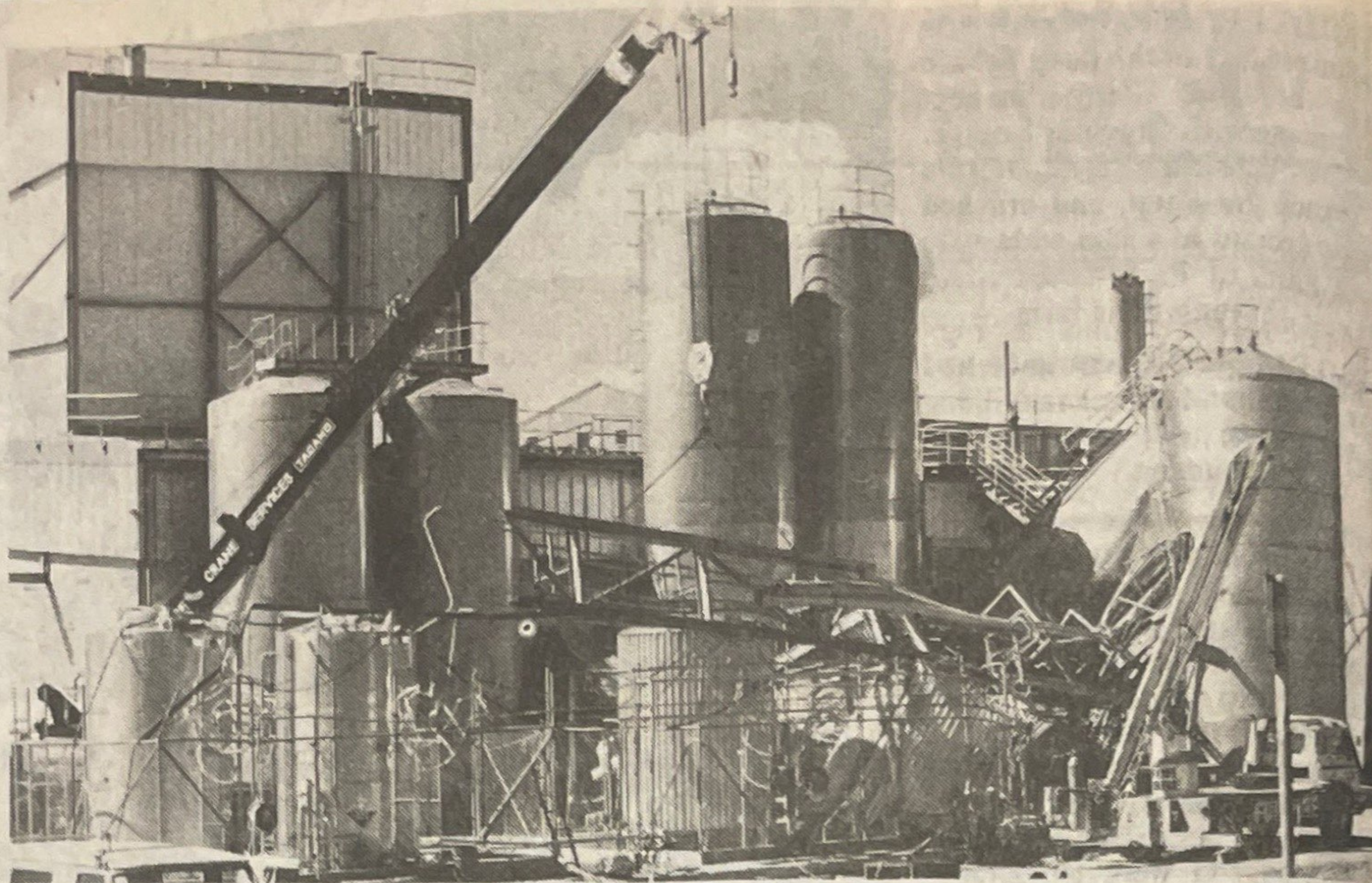
The damage to buildings, equipment and services was still being assessed as the Dairy Exporter went to press.

All processing equipment is being dismantled and checked. Swiss and German engineers were flown out to help inspect manufacturing equipment.

Many silos and delivery pipes suffered heavily — particularly where ground subsided near the Rangitaiki River.

Silos filled with fluids toppled in the shakes, spilling their contents and damaging other silos and pipelines as they swayed and fell.

Underground service lines may have been affected by land



**Cranes were called in to clear debris of whey silos, chemical tanks and stainless steel pipes at Bay Milk. Behind, a modern factory building is apparently little harmed.**

movement; details were still being assessed.

Seismic studies and tests on soil structure and foundations are part of the site study.

Dairy products held in the big stores collapsed in jumbled heaps, and some pushed out through walls. In one butter store, racks on either side of the aisle moved in opposite directions as they dumped their loads.

Staff were clearing stores and salvaging undamaged product. Salvagable butter will be re-worked to anhydrous milkfat.

A weary senior staff member said 20 years of development had disappeared in seconds.

Staff coped well with trying circumstances at work, then going home to face cleaning-up personal belongings.

But cleaning-up was almost impossible in many homes with water, sewerage and electricity all cut.

## Coping

Milk Products' factories at Opotiki and Te Puke have been stretched in coping with milk from throughout Bay of Plenty.

The Opotiki factory was brimful with 900,000 litres/day and making high-volume throughput products of skim-milk powder and casein. Cream was backloaded for processing at the Te Puke fat-mix plant. Neither factory was damaged by the quakes.



**Tall stacks of stored dairy products were tossed into a jumbled mess of bags and pallets in Bay Milk drystores.**

The Morrinsville-Thames Valley company took milk from north of Te Puke through much of March. Cream was backloaded to Te Puke.

Bay Milk teams visited farms to check refrigerated vats and damaged sheds. Milk collection continued, though pick-up times were disrupted. Tankers were hard-pressed to meet the demands of collecting milk, backloading cream and supplying water for homes and stock.

But despite the difficulties in the Edgecumbe area, Mr Larsen says the \$2.6 million redevelopment projects at the Te Puke fat-mix plant are going ahead as planned.

The first stage was being

commissioned when the quakes rocked Bay of Plenty. Work is continuing this winter to have the second stage ready for the new season.

The Te Puke plant will increase production of milkfat and vegetable oil products, and cook up new ones. Its products include fresh frozen milk for recombining, particularly in Middle Eastern markets, and edible fats for Japan. D

**Reports and  
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