

Recently field work was undertaken for the preliminary investigation of limestone deposits adjacent to areas of concentrated farming settlement, and this resulted in the purchase, for installation on the east coast, of a mobile limestone pulverizer capable of producing 40 tons of lime per day.

From a development point of view, agricultural lime (which must be rich in calcium content and is usually shell lime with a phosphatic element) and builders' lime (from a fine-grained, white, chalky stone) are important. Outcrops between Te Araroa and Hicks Bay have shown a calcium carbonate content of 94 per cent. to 96 per cent., and their working will enable the supply of lime to farms and schemes previously denied a supply through the prohibitive cost of transport.

Ahuwhenua Trophy

The annual competition for the trophy donated in 1933 by Viscount Bledisloe for the most progressive Maori farmer was this year judged by the Field Instructor of the Department of Agriculture stationed at Hamilton. The winner, Henare Paraone, a unit of Clevedon, in the Waikato-Maniapoto District, was commended by the judge for the manner he has broken in and brought into profitable production such a quantity of hard and poor country. The unit is a good, all-round farmer, has a good knowledge of fat-lamb raising, bacon-production, and beef-production. He does all his own buying and selling of live-stock and plans farming operations well ahead, showing wisdom in making a large quantity of hay and ensilage during 1944-45 when grass was plentiful.

The second placed competitor, Robert Tanginoa Tapa, of Ranana, in the Aotea District, has done very good work in breaking in country that was infested with blackberry, gorse, and ragwort. Good judgment had been exercised in bringing in small areas at a time.

Wiremu Matene Naera, of Waiotemarama, in the Tokerau District, was placed third in the competition and commended by the judge as a thorough and economical man who looks after his farm well, while Heemi Lawson, of Torere, was placed fourth after mention was made of the work he had done breaking in country previously infested by ragwort.

Weather

The abnormal weather conditions experienced during the past twelve months are reflected to a certain extent in the returns from farming. During the earlier part of the period departmental farms in Taranaki (Aotea District) experienced a rainfall in excess of the normal, while other areas experienced a deficiency, particularly between Hastings and East Cape, where the fall was less than a quarter of the normal. In June nearly all districts received roughly half the usual rainfall, and this condition continued into July and August, except in Nelson, where rivers were in flood during the latter month.

Generally the dry conditions continued except for some periods of broken weather which hindered shearing and harvesting, and it can be said that at this time the dryness became critical in Hawke's Bay. It was not until the middle of March that the North Island districts suffering from the drought received any beneficial rains, but when they did most pastures made a sufficiently good recovery to ease partially the winter fodder position, which, however, is still critical. Palliative measures taken include the purchase of hay in Otago and Southland (where harvests were satisfactory) for transfer to the drought-stricken areas, particularly in Tokerau and Waikato-Maniapoto Districts covering North and South Auckland, and the Waiariki and Tairāwhiti Districts covering Bay of Plenty, Taupo, Northern Hawke's Bay, Gisborne, and East Coast areas.