

In Otago and Southland mild autumn and winter conditions were favourable for pasture-production, and spring growth began early, though in inland areas conditions were too dry for the usual flush of spring growth. In North and Central Otago dry conditions in autumn affected pastures adversely, whereas in Southland good rains just before Christmas caused good growth and favourable conditions generally extended into the autumn.

SUPPLEMENTARY FODDER

In the North Island good crops of hay and silage were saved in the early part of the season, though yields were affected later by dry summer weather. However, those conditions were particularly favourable for good harvesting, the material being cut generally much earlier than usual, with the result that hay is of better quality. A considerable amount of hay and silage was used in districts later affected by drought to keep up the milk-supply, and the reserves which have been built up in other districts may be called on largely to make up deficiencies of hay for winter feeding in parts of Wellington Province. The growth of fodder crops suffered because of dry summer weather.

In the South Island crops of hay were also saved under good conditions and increased areas were cut in Otago and Southland because of the favourable spring.

Fodder crops varied considerably and those in Canterbury and North Otago suffered severely during the dry autumn. Turnip and swede crops in particular were affected by insect damage. In Southland, where favourable conditions enabled cultivation work and sowing to be carried out early, good crops of swedes and turnips are reported.

CROPS

Conditions in the main cropping areas of the South Island were again unfavourable for autumn sowing of crops but, apart from one or two districts, spring-sown crops were established under good conditions. As a result, the area of wheat was reduced and a greater area planted in spring-sown crops such as barley and peas.

Details of estimated areas of chief crops and the comparative figures for 1946-47 are as follows:—

	1946-47.	1947-48.
	Acres.	Acres (Estimated).
Wheat	144,006	122,000
Oats (all purposes)	181,468	171,000
Barley (all purposes)	62,845	76,000
Potatoes	19,276	19,300
Onions	1,202	1,380
Peas	51,481	60,000
Maize (for grain)	7,865	7,300

Wheat.—The acreage in wheat again declined. In the South Island on the heavier land yields were excellent, but on the lighter land yields were down and some of the samples were pinched and of low bushel weight. The bulk of the wheat, however, was of very good quality, partly because of the excellent harvesting-conditions. In the North Island wheat crops in some districts suffered severely from the dry weather and from attacks of rust, and generally the yields were well below normal.

Oats.—Except for late-sown crops, yields were good and, apart from Southland, where quality suffered through lodging, the grain was generally in good condition.