

Here and there, as plateaux on the downs country, are basaltic lava flows on which are scattered low, steep-sided scoria cones, while in the far north and on the west coast are large areas of consolidated sand. Numerous coastal indentations and waterways, bounded by areas of alluvial and marine flats, intersect the rolling downs country. Most of the land is less than 500 ft. or 600 ft. above sea-level, a few areas being above 1,000 ft. The Soil Survey Division of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research has subdivided the 5,200 square miles of the surveyed peninsula into 500 square miles of flats, 2,100 square miles of easy and rolling country, 2,000 square miles of moderately steep hill country, and 600 square miles of steep hill country.

The climate of North Auckland is warm and temperate, and the prevailing winds are westerly. The mean annual rainfall varies between 40 in. and 70 in. Because of the strong westerly winds, the high rainfall, and the heavy nature of the majority of the soils, the spring pasture growth is normally later than it is in the South Auckland and Waikato districts.

The landscape appearance of the region is one of great diversity. Within short distances on alluvial flats and rolling downs pasture lands alternate with unimproved manuka heaths. On the higher hills and mountains pastures, forests, fern, and manuka form a similar complex pattern of improved, unimproved, and reverted land.

Dairying is the most important industry, and is centred on the flat alluvial land and the lower hills in the numerous river valleys, and on the basic volcanic plateaux which are scattered through the region. Intensive fat-lamb production is also practised on these areas, except on the heavier and wetter alluvial flats, which are used almost exclusively for dairying and cattle fattening. The more extensive types of sheep-farming are confined to the surface-sown hills. With its closely associated areas of hill and flat the region is self-contained in its live-stock economy, and there is little inward or outward movement of store or breeding stock.

Paspalum pastures are the most characteristic feature of the region, and, whilst special-purpose paspalum pastures occur further south, it is only in this region that paspalum assumes real importance. Paspalum is a tropical grass, and for vigorous growth it demands soils of high fertility and the absence of heavy winter frosts. It was first sown on the rich alluvial river flats, where it gained almost complete dominance owing to its resistance to winter flooding, but its use has since extended to poorer soils where, although its production is not high, it forms a close permanent sward. Paspalum pastures do not start to make vigorous growth until November, but production is high through the summer and early autumn, and the seasonal production of paspalum is reflected in dairy production by the lateness of the spring growth. Also owing to the vigorous summer and early autumn production, the rank feed which is in excess of the dairy herds' requirements is often left *in situ* to carry the cows through the early part of the winter, so that the area saved for hay per cow is less in this region than in other dairying districts.

Soil type has been an important factor in influencing the development of farming lands. The early settlers were attracted to the more fertile areas covered in puriri and taraire bush on the basic volcanic and limestone soils; later arrivals developed the mixed bush lands on the alluvial flats and higher hills and mountains, but avoided the large areas of rolling downs in manuka scrub on the poor gumland and ironstone soil areas. The gumlands originally carried kauri forests, and the land was dug over