

5. Individual settlement of self-supporting and self-reliant settlers on their own farms is the ultimate aim of Maori land development where the areas are suitable for subdivision.

6. The number of individual farmers under control at 31st March, 1950, was 1,781, and details are as follows:—

Shown in the 1949 report, with necessary adjustment	..	1,796
Less—		
Settlers released from control to handle their own affairs	39
Farms amalgamated	14
		— 53
		1,743
Plus new settlers	38
		—
Total settlers now on books	1,781

Butterfat

7. An increase in production of 176,849 lb. butterfat from 38,944 cows was recorded over the previous season by Maori dairy-farmers, the total production being 6,291,058 lb., equivalent to 3,370 tons of butter.

8. These figures are the highest achieved to date, the increase being all the more pleasing when it is remembered that the large producing district of Northland suffered a severe drought which seriously retarded production. The average per cow of 162 lb. of butterfat was slightly in excess of the previous year, and in view of the seasonal difficulties and the fact that many Maori farmers are dairying on land which is of poor to average quality, the return is not altogether unsatisfactory.

9. The average herd in Maori land development is approximately 22 cows, many of the farms being small and consequently not set up so efficiently as the full-scale dairy-farm. The average for all North Island herds of that size is approximately 45 lb. per cow better.

10. If, however, the average were nearer the North Island average, the benefit of the extra production, both to the farmer and to the national economy, would be considerable.

11. Means to bridge the gap are under consideration whereby farming efficiency can be improved together with the quality of the herds. These include special supervision of backward unit settlers, intensified instruction, budgeting and planning of the individual settler's programme, more herd-testing, and seeking out and, where necessary, training suitable young Maoris to replace those who have proved unsuitable as farmers.

Live-stock

12. On suitable lands it is the policy of the Department to breed its own stock requirements, and the aim is to sell as many surplus stock possible as fast where conditions allow. Where fattening is not possible on a property it is customary to arrange, at market rates, transfers of store sheep and cattle to properties where fattening is carried on. In the area under development, 717 more dairy cows, 1,640 more run cattle, and 3,949 more sheep were carried than the previous year. Including those under East Coast Commissioner control, the stock depasturing on all properties total 521,170 sheep, 60,469 run cattle, and 63,559 dairy stock.