

The local stock values were fairly well maintained till well into the summer, but since then there has been very little doing either in buying or selling; but as the wool and meat prices are still well maintained, values must improve as feed becomes more plentiful.

Cropping: Crops generally were light as the result of the dry season, but prices have been abnormally high. In former seasons practically all the oats grown were converted into chaff for local requirements, but during the past season the high price obtainable for the grain induced many settlers to thresh. The following are the ruling prices for the crops raised this year: Grass-seed (farmers' dressed), 7s. 6d. per bushel; oats, 5s. to 6s. per bushel (usual price, 2s. 5d. to 3s. 3d.); maize, 6s. per bushel (usual price, about 2s.); chaff, £8 10s. (usual price, about £4 10s.); Cape barley, 5s. 4d. to 5s. 6d. (usual price, 1s. 9d. to 2s. 6d.) per bushel.

*Southern Portion of the District.*

The abnormally dry season experienced during the year in Hawke's Bay has seriously interfered with farming operations of all descriptions, and accelerated the falling-off of the milk-supply of the various factories throughout the district. Late frosts were experienced, and considerably damaged many orchards in the early stages of fruiting. Stock (principally sheep and cattle), owing to the shortage of grass and rough cattle-feed, of which latter there is usually an abundance to meet winter conditions, are not expected to winter well, and the death-rate will be considerable. The returns for the season will probably show a substantial decrease in the output of butter and cheese compared with previous years.

The Dannevirke district is steadily coming into prominence as a dairying centre, and the industry is spreading in all directions.

The settlement of the Otawhao Block, near Takapau, has been followed by great activity and enterprise. Originally dense bush, the land has been cleared, and the area is carrying a wonderful growth of grass, notwithstanding the considerable damage done through bush-fires in the summer months. An adjoining area will be opened for closer settlement in the near future as dairy farms, and the increased acreage and number of settlers should be the means of establishing cheese and butter factories on a large scale.

Owing to the shortage of pasture, stores (either cattle or sheep) do not meet with ready sale. Fat stock, on the other hand, are eagerly sought after, fat bullocks being known to bring 6d. per pound live weight.

Wool, butter, and cheese have considerably advanced in prices. With crossbred wool reaching 1s. 5½d. per pound, dairy butter 1s. 2d., and cheese 8d. per pound, wheat 8s., barley 6s., and oats 5s. per bushel, with oaten sheaf chaff as high as £10 and meadow hay £6 per ton, the cost of living has very appreciably risen, and will no doubt seriously affect many members of the community.

TARANAKI.

Generally speaking, this is mainly a grazing and dairying district, and on the land occupied by Crown tenants, and indeed throughout the whole district, the growing of crops is as a rule only undertaken for the supply of winter feed for stock, and in the rougher parts scarcely sufficient of that is done. A settler on any bush selection can only do so at a reasonable expense, when the stumps on his land become rotten enough for easy removal. In the northern end of the district the Ranger reports that for this season more land than usual has been broken up for root crops, but less than in the previous season for oats and chaff. In the King-country on the open fern land the plough is being largely used for breaking up the land prior to sowing down grass, and quite steep land is being ploughed. In a few years a great improvement will be noticeable in this respect. On the bush selections any settlers who are thrifty seem to rely chiefly on hay as a standby. On the rougher parts of the southern end of the district flat or easily ploughable land is scarce, and on many selections there is enough bush land for felling to obtain a crop of turnips with the sowing of grass-seed on new burns. On the older settled parts turnips, mangolds, and hay seem most in evidence, though a small amount of maize, oats, and lucerne is grown and ensilage used. Grass looks fairly well in the Ohura district, but not up to the usual elsewhere.

The ruling prices for stock as gathered from sale reports average as follows: Fat bullocks, £8 to £12; fat cows, £6 to £8; forward store cows, £5; dairy cows, £7 to £10; dairy heifers, £5 to £7; two-year heifers, £3 to £4; yearling steers, £1 15s. to £2; two-year steers, £5 to £6; calves, £1 5s. Sheep: Good fat sheep, £1; good store sheep, 15s.; good fat lambs, 15s.; ordinary lambs, 10s.; old ewes, sound mouth, in lamb, 15s.; fat and forward ewes, 17s. Pigs: