

incomplete criterion of the economic possibilities of chilled beef on a considerable scale. The raising of beef cattle specifically for conversion into chilled beef of sufficient quality to enable it to compete satisfactorily with chilled-beef supplies which have already won a place in the meat trade promises to be a distinct undertaking from the raising of beef cattle which, prior to being slaughtered, serve as agents in the management of relatively indifferent pastures. The type of animal required and the cost of feeding to produce that type are matters about which further information is needed to determine the potential role of chilled beef in the farming of the Dominion.

In general, the market for draught horses for farm work has been strong. This is to some extent due to a replacement of tractors by horses. Largely it may be attributed jointly to a decline over a series of years in the number of horses in the Dominion and to a trend towards freer use of horses on farms which are devoted dominantly to grass-farming and which are now assigning more importance than they did a few years ago to arable cropping for the purpose of supplementing the pastures. Indicative of this is the fact that in 1932 and in 1933 the total importations of rape, kale, turnip, and swede seeds were greater than in any of the previous seven years. The export, at satisfactory prices, of draught horses to Australia increased, and in general the outlook for the breeder of good draught horses is encouraging. The breeding of light horses, of which there is a scarcity, is at a low ebb.

The quality of pastoral produce has received close attention during the year. The improvement in the quality of New Zealand cheese which occurred in the 1932-33 season has been continued during the 1933-34 season. It would seem that this improvement in the quality of New Zealand cheese, which was noted not only by the graders in New Zealand but also by traders and graders in Great Britain, is to some extent a result of compulsory differential payments for butterfat associated with milk-grading at cheese-factories which were brought into force in August, 1933. In general, in flavour and quality, the bulk of New Zealand cheese is commercially good, and the problems relative to texture continue to be the subject of investigation. The quality of the season's butter approximated the high quality of the previous season: as formerly, many brands have been so favourably reported upon as to leave little, if anything, to be desired. In some butters in which the quality was not so high the falling-off is considered to be due to the effects of feed, which are difficult in practice to avoid. The season provided further evidence that the greatest practicable frequency in the delivery of cream is worth striving for.

The normal high quality of New Zealand meat was well maintained during the year. As a rule, lack of quality of produce becomes less discussed as the market improves. This has been exemplified this year in the improved wool-market. The emphasis which has been placed in recent years on the importance of quality in our wool has been of distinct value in concentrating attention upon some of the main farm-management measures which affect quality. The practice of skirting the fleeces at shearing-time and arranging for the wool to be binned at the stores continues to grow in popularity among small growers, and is to be commended.

FRUITGROWING.

The area in commercial orchards in the Dominion is practically stationary at 27,000 acres. Despite changeable weather conditions during the growing-season the crop of apples and pears was above the average, but the crop of stone-fruit was somewhat light, and small fruits suffered from dry conditions. The total quantity of fruit exported in the 1933 export season was 1,430,513 cases—a decrease of 165,000 cases in comparison with the previous season. While returns at the beginning of the season were fairly satisfactory, the market later became glutted, and consequently prices were low. The export season of 1934 just ended closed with a total of 1,574,912 cases, and, as in the previous season, in general returns are disappointing. A trial shipment of peaches to London opened up in good appearance, condition, and colour, but flavour was lacking to some extent. The results were similar in respect to a trial shipment of plums.

The yield of citrus fruits in the Dominion is gradually increasing, and in this connection it may be noted that the Poorman orange is increasing in popularity and coming into use as a good substitute for imported grape-fruit. The production of lemons is excellent as regards quantity, but the marketable quality of many of these home-grown lemons is greatly depreciated through failure to subject them to a proper grading and curing process. If all our lemons were properly graded and cured there would be little need for importations of this fruit.

There has been a falling-off in the quantity of passion-fruit grown in the North Auckland District. New-Zealand-made wines are gradually increasing in favour. The season's output of wine is approximately 138,000 gallons—a substantial increase on that of the previous year.