

The farm has again suffered badly as a result of heavy floods, in consequence of which repairs were necessary to 126 chains of fencing and 140 chains of draining. Subsequent to the heavy rains, great havoc was occasioned to the pastures by the ravages of a plague of caterpillars, which left the flats barren of grass. This state of affairs, combined with the fact that the herd had no hay last winter due to flood damage the previous summer, has resulted in the decrease in butterfat returns, while the stock and lambs have not fattened.

A shearing plant and a wool-press were recently purchased, and it is considered that later these may be transferred to Tautoro Bush when a wool-shed is erected on that property. The pastures on the farm are at present short, but with recent fine weather the country is drier, and the flats healthier than for a considerable time past. A quantity of hay (approximately 35 tons) was cut, but owing to adverse weather conditions portion of the crop was damaged.

Tautoro Bush.

When this block of 1,607 acres was taken over from the Lands Department in 1931, for development purposes, it was in forest. It is situated near Kaikohe in the Bay of Islands district. Prior to administration by the Native Department, there were no improvements on the land, and to-day there are 1,200 acres sown in permanent grass carrying 1,627 sheep, and 329 head of cattle. The number of bales of wool obtained was 26, which produced a net receipt of £250. The land in places is inclined to run to fern, and to obviate this, some 500 head of cattle are required to be grazed. However, a dry season would do a lot of good on this area and enable bush, which has been felled, but not successfully burnt, to be cleaned up.

A considerable amount of draining has been undertaken on the swamp portion, 72 chains having been done during the past year, with excellent results. This swamp land will be burnt and sown this autumn. In the light of this experience, further draining is to be contemplated. In order to satisfactorily hold the pasture, an area of 300-400 acres will require to be logged and top-dressed this ensuing year.

A shearing-shed is becoming a necessity on the block (in the past sheep have been driven to Motatau Base Farm for shearing), and provision for this will have to be made in the near future.

Waima Bush.

Originally in bush, chiefly taraire with scattered puriri, this property, comprising 1,414 acres and situated in the southern Hokianga district, has been cleared under developmental operations to the extent of 1,100 acres, upon which 262 head of cattle and 1,793 sheep were being carried at 31st March, 1936.

The past year's activities embraced 502 chains of new fencing, 90 acres sown in grass, 114 acres of ploughing, and 200 acres of stumping and logging, resulting from all of which it is now possible to effectively farm the land. The pastures are in good order, and it is hoped in the immediate future to procure a better and thicker sward of grass by pursuing an intensive programme of logging up and top-dressing, combined with rotational grazing. The total receipts to 31st March, 1936, from the sale of stock, sheep, and wool amounted to £2,798, of which £348 represents the sale of 35 bales of wool.

Under an agreement with the Native owners of the block, the property is due to be handed back to them in 1937. It does not appear to be expedient in their interests, however, to subdivide the land into individual holdings for dairy-farming until the provision of a permanent water-supply is ensured.

The future policy will be the subject of a discussion with the owners at the first suitable opportunity.

Panguru Base Farm.

This farm, comprising 297 acres of freehold and leasehold lands, of which 277 acres are in grass and divided into nine paddocks, is situated in the northern Hokianga district, near Panguru. The contour of the land is hilly but easily workable. The country was originally covered with thick bush and is of good quality.

Consequent upon excessive rainfall and floods during the summer much damage was suffered, especially to the fences. These have been repaired, and a further 147 chains of new fencing was erected in the course of the year. Last season 202 lambs and 60 culls were sold off the property, while 70 heifers were transferred to units. The total proceeds from the sale of the stock were £670. Stocking at present is not as heavy as usual, as it is anticipated that during the winter a considerable number of culled and surplus stock will have to be transferred from units to this farm. The remaining 20 acres of ti-tree and second growth have been cut and cleared in readiness for burning and sowing. A certain amount of top-dressing will be necessary during the coming season in order to maintain the pastures.

Manukau Base Farm.

Situated near Herekino in the Mangonui County, Manukau Base Farm contains an area of 830 acres. It was taken over from the State Advances Office in September, 1933. The total area in permanent pastures is 375 acres, of which 24 acres were sown during the year under review. It is proposed to utilize the farm in connection with consolidation of interests in certain adjoining Native lands—a scheme of subdivision having been drawn up and approved by the Native Land Court. In the meantime it is being used for the purpose of assembling culled stock from Native holdings in the Mangonui district, and at the 31st March last 65 heifers and 72 culled run cattle were being carried.