

PASTURES AND CROPS.

DECEMBER.

OFFICERS of the Fields and Experimental Farms Division of the Department report as follows on the condition of the pastures and crops during the past month:—

WHANGAREI.—There has not been an inch of rain in the last two months. Consequently there is a lack of feed all over the north. Should the weather continue dry, as it gives every appearance of doing, it will be serious for the farmer. *Paspalum* is the only green feed, and undoubtedly in a drought it is at its best. Nearly all the oat crops are harvested and in most cases are turning out considerably better than was expected.—*A. P. Speedy.*

OPOTIKI.—December was exceptionally dry. Rain is badly needed now for the maize crops, which are very backward. Some very inferior crops are to be seen about the district. In several instances crops had to be resown on account of the continuous rains during the time of planting. In some instances the crops have been affected by the grub. Harvesting operations have just commenced, and farmers are making the most of the present dry weather. Potatoes throughout the district are more or less affected by blight.—*J. Case.*

AUCKLAND.—The month just ended, from a farmer's point of view, was all that could be desired. Crops have been harvested in splendid condition. The fine weather encouraged the settlers to work early and late to get in their crops before a further break in the weather. No doubt everything is drying up, and rain is much needed to give new life to the pastures and other crops. Stock of all descriptions are looking well at present, and prices ruling for both fat stock and dairy cows are very high compared with late years.—*R. Rowan.*

TE AROHA.—Excellent weather was experienced in December, with two light falls of rain. Root crops are already sown and require moisture, but the majority of farmers are waiting for rain before sowing turnips, &c. There are good crops of hay and oats, being also free of rust, &c. Harvesting is in full swing. With the absence of heavy rains excellent hay and oats will be stocked. The butter-fat output has dropped a little, but a nice fall of rain will bring it to a normal plane.—*J. L. Morris.*

HAMILTON.—A few light rains in the early part of the month, hot dry weather during the remainder, with warm breezes which are rapidly drying up the pastures, was the experience in December. Grain crops are looking well, and there is every prospect of a good harvest. Stock are in good health and condition, and the season has been particularly good for dairy herds up to the present. Prices for all classes of stock are easier, and should the dry weather continue will fall lower.—*J. Kerr.*

CAMBRIDGE.—The weather for December was warm and dry, with no wind to speak of, and practically no rain. Haymaking is in full swing and is being got in in good condition. Oats are also being harvested, and, on the whole, the crops are very good. Potato crops are looking healthy, very little blight being reported. Pastures throughout the district are good.—*A. A. Clapcott.*

TE AWAMUTU.—December was an exceptionally warm month, and, following on a wet spring, the result was abundance of feed for stock. Hay is in good supply, and in most instances is cut and in the stack. There has not been so much oats sown this year, but crops are looking well and are quickly ripening. Turnips are again being sown in large areas, and should rain come soon a good take should result. Stock in general are looking well, but there has been a slight slump in prices. A much better month for the dairyman than December of 1911.—*C. E. McPhee.*

TE KUITI.—The most seasonable conditions were experienced in December—ideal summer weather in every respect. To these favourable climatic conditions pastures have been responsive by showing good growth, with a hardening tendency, thus giving