

NEW-ZEALAND-FLAX CULTURE.

D. M. LUSK, Christchurch :—

How is flax (*Phormium*) seed planted—to what depth and to what distance apart? How long after planting will the flax be ready for cutting, and how many years before one can cut again?

The Fields Division :—

Phormium-seed should be sown similarly to onion-seed, but much thinner. When the plants are sufficiently strong they should be transplanted in rows, 4 ft. apart. Flax grown from seed takes from six to eight years to mature, according to climatic and soil conditions. After being cut or harvested, it is between three and four years before the next growth of leaves can be gathered.

SOFT-BOTTOMED DRAINS.

“SUBSCRIBER,” Hamilton :—

What is the best material to use for drains where the bottom is too soft for tiles?

The Fields Division :—

If the subsoil is not too loose, but loose enough for the water to undermine the drainpipes, you could place the latter on 6 in. by 1 in. boards laid carefully along the bottom of the loose-bottomed ditch. This supports the pipes. If thought necessary, the boards could be tarred to make them last. If, however, the ground is very loose, you had better construct fluming or boxing for the bad stretch of drain, the fluming being made of a size of boards that will suit the size of pipes employed. The joints between the fluming-ends and the pipes should be neatly jointed, plastic clay being used, if necessary, to seal the junctures. The fluming could be tarred to protect the wood if considered advisable.

SWELLING IN SHEATH OF WETHERS.

JOHN E. JENNINGS, Motu, Gisborne :—

Could you advise me how best to treat what appears to be a stoppage or considerable swelling of the urethra in four-tooth or older wethers, resulting in blood-poisoning and death in odd cases. The sheep are in forward condition, belly-wool much stained. The time would be before shearing, in October or later. The sheep are running on the Poverty Bay flats.

The Live-stock Division :—

The swelling in the sheath is generally due to a decomposition of salts, &c., from the urine, and in some cases by foreign substances gaining access. Treatment consists in washing out the sheath and removing the deposit by means of an enema syringe and warm soapy water, then applying a little boracic ointment.

OATS FOR FEEDING AND CROP.

“INQUIRER,” Nelson :—

I want to sow a paddock with Dun oats (good land, partly drained swamp) with the intention of fattening a few lambs during late summer and autumn. If sown in the middle of December, could I then expect a crop the following year after being fed off? If not, when is the earliest that it is safe to sow?

The Fields Division :—

If the oats are sown in the middle of December they would mature this season and would not carry over until the following year. If, however, you sow, say, about the middle of February, you could feed them off two or three times, and then let them go to provide a crop for next year. We would advise your feeding the oats off each time well before there is any danger of them heading out, yet at the same time letting them go to provide good growth for feeding off. Also allow sufficient growth to take place before the frosts of winter set in, so as to carry them through. This can be regulated by judicious feeding-off.