

SEASONAL NOTES.

THE FARM.

FIELD CROPS AND PASTURES.

Autumn Sowings.

APRIL is a good time generally for the sowing of oats intended for threshing or cutting into chaff. If put in during this month they provide a lot of green feeding during the winter and spring, and ripen early. Algerians have many merits, and may be sown at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per acre. Where required a suitable manure is a half-and-half mixture of superphosphate and Nauru rock phosphate, 1 cwt. to 2 cwt. per acre.

May being recognized as the month for beginning autumn sowings of wheat, land intended for this crop should be cultivated all through April, as it is well to get the seed-bed prepared in advance. It should be borne in mind that manures do not take the place of cultivation, but are an adjunct to it. If the soil is not properly worked and consolidated no amount of fertilizer will ensure a good crop.

Where not already done the sowing-down of pastures should be pushed on as fast as possible, as late sowing generally means a big reduction in the clover content. From now on, particularly in the colder situations, it is often good practice to sow a bushel of Cape barley or one of the white oats with the grass-seed, to provide shelter for the young clover.

The sowing of winter and early spring forage crops should as far as possible be completed in March. Though much of this work is done in April, the value of early sowing generally may be stressed. Suitable crop-mixtures and fertilizers were indicated in last month's notes.

The Potato Crop.

From now on main-crop potatoes will be ready for lifting. The tubers should be carefully sorted, and those intended for marketing later pitted on a well-drained piece of land, the pit being well thatched to keep out frost and winter rains. Potatoes intended for seed should be stored in a cool, dry, well-aired shed.

Liming and Top-dressing.

In many districts April is the best month for liming. When lime is being applied to arable land it should be broadcast and worked into the soil in course of the final working. If the lime is applied as a top-dressing to pasture, the farmer should have fixed in his mind the necessity for following it up by an application of phosphates in the spring. Though more difficult to handle, crushed burnt lime is generally more satisfactory and more economical than carbonate, as about half the amount is the equivalent and gives quicker results.

Irrigation Farming.

Where irrigation farming is practised, especially in Central Otago, every endeavour should be made during April to break up land intended to be sown out in the spring. This ploughing should not be delayed until later, as the ground would then in all probability be too hard. From now on preparation should be made to have contour ditches cut, leading water to those places in the various paddocks which during the past season have proved hard to irrigate. This particularly applies to undulating country. Low-lying parts of the paddocks which become flooded during the irrigation season should have open drains cut, so as to allow surplus water to be carried off to lower levels. Ditches can now be cleared while still soft, and all boxes which have become disrepaired during the season should have attention.