

SEASONAL NOTES.

THE FARM.

CULTIVATION.

WITH the arrival of August the preparation of land for spring crops must be pushed along as conditions of soil and weather will allow. For root crops such as carrots and mangolds the ploughing should be as deep as the nature of the land permits, provided always that the sod can be properly turned under. Virgin land, such as newly stumped areas, intended for swedes or turnips should also be ploughed as early as possible. Early ploughing allows the turned-under material time to rot and form a union with the subsoil, which ensures a good supply of moisture during the hot summer months by capillary attraction. For wheat the seed-bed should be worked deeply. The cultivator does better than the disk, as it works the fine soil down and brings the clods to the surface. These afford shelter for the young plants, and are later broken down by the roller.

CEREAL CROPS.

Generally speaking, the end of August is quite early enough for sowing spring wheat. In order to make up for the lesser amount of tillering, a heavier seeding than with autumn-sown is required, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per acre being the correct thing. Superphosphate, from 1 cwt. to 2 cwt. per acre, is a suitable manure. Spring-sown cereals in general are more susceptible to disease than those sown in autumn, and all seed-wheat should be dressed for smut before sowing. The best dressing is the ordinary 40-per-cent. formalin as supplied by chemists, at the rate of 1 pint to 40 gallons of water. Spread the wheat out on a floor and sprinkle with spray-pump or watering-can until all the grain is wet, using a shovel to do the necessary turning. The grain should be left on the floor all night and bagged in the morning. Any wheat which may happen to be left over when sowing is completed can be used for fowl-feed, there being no danger from poisoning.

The standard wheats for South Island grain-growing districts need hardly be mentioned here. Among the best varieties for North Island conditions are Major, Marquis, and John Brown. During the last two seasons in several districts Major has beaten all other varieties for yield, and has the great advantage that the straw is very strong and will stand up on most lands. Besides this, it is a quick-maturing wheat, and may be sown as late as the first week in October.

Oats and early barley also may be sown in August. Cape or (if obtainable) Black Skinless barley can be put in for spring feed.

Where it is intended to carry on an autumn-sown cereal crop for grain, chaff, or hay the final feeding should in most cases be done by the end of August, the exceptions being very strong land where there is a danger of the crop growing too much straw and lodging. In such situations feeding-off may often be profitably carried on until the end of September. After the final feeding the field should be given one or two strokes of the tine harrows. This will open the land and greatly hasten subsequent growth. If the crop has not been previously manured and appears somewhat thin or weak 1 cwt. of superphosphate per acre, applied before or during the harrowing, will greatly benefit it, and often means the difference between a profitable crop and a failure.

SPECIAL CROPS FOR HAY OR ENSILAGE.

In dry situations these may be sown towards the end of August, but generally September is early enough. Mixtures of oats and tares, oats and peas, and wheat and tares or peas are the most suitable; but where wheat is used instead of oats the tares seem to do better. As a general rule the sowing is at the rate of 2 bushels of the cereal to one of tares or peas. Golden tares are the best for spring sowing, but the ordinary grey does quite well. Grey Partridge or Early Minto are good varieties of peas. Suitable manures are basic super, super, or mixtures of half super and half Nauru phosphate or basic slag, 1 cwt. to 3 cwt.