

## BOYS' AND GIRLS' AGRICULTURAL CLUBS.

### NOTES ON THE TARANAKI AND WANGANUI EDUCATION DISTRICTS COMPETITIONS: SEASON 1922-23.

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THE work of the agricultural clubs in the Taranaki and Wanganui districts in the 1922-23 season was carried out on the same general lines as in the preceding year. In the root-growing competitions, however, the conditions were slightly altered by raising the points allowed for cultivation from 20 to 40, and reducing the points allowed for weight from 2 points per ton to 1 point per ton. By this means it was felt that more encouragement would be given to cultivation, and that competitors with poorer land would be put on a more equal footing with one on an exceptionally rich area, it being possible under the new method for a crop much inferior in weight to beat the heavier one, provided more attention had been given to cultivation and records, which are considered the two most important points.

The central division in Taranaki was cut out and the area divided between north and south Taranaki. Swedes were also eliminated, and the root competitions confined to mangolds and carrots. The mangolds grown were Prizewinner Yellow Globe, and the carrots Matchless White.

In addition to the root-growing and calf-feeding competitions a poultry club was started at New Plymouth. There were not a great many competitors—twenty entering and seventeen carrying on—but it is hoped that this class of competition will extend. The procuring of broody hens at the right time seems to be one of the greatest difficulties.

#### ROOT-GROWING COMPETITIONS.

The season generally was excessively wet and not conducive to the best results from field operations, especially where young people were concerned. While there were many failures from this cause, the percentages of competitors who carried their plots right through to the judging-day are very gratifying. In the Taranaki district fifty-four schools made 491 entries, of which number 335, or 68.2 per cent., had their plots judged. In the Wanganui district sixteen schools made 138 entries, of which 70, or 50.7 per cent., were judged. As in previous years, the judges reported a considerable number of failures owing to stock gaining access to the plots. It is regrettable that no improvement has been shown in this direction.

The Taranaki results show that the heaviest crops are not quite up to the best yields of the previous year. This is fairly general in all classes of crops, no doubt due to the excessively wet autumn. On the other hand, the average yields for each school are more even than in previous years. Further, the judges found that cultivation had been better carried out, and that the average plot was much tidier than in previous years. This indicates a closer study of the instructions given from time to time, and a better knowledge on the part of the pupil,