

view. The crop should be cut in the morning of a good day for curing. In the late afternoon it should be quite ready to rake into windrows with the ordinary rake, or preferably a side-delivery rake. During the following forenoon it will most probably be fit to bunch together into rough cocks with the ordinary rake, and in the afternoon of that day it may be stacked. The hay should not be allowed to cure too long in the windrow, otherwise too many leaves will be lost in raking and handling the crop. When lucerne is raked before the leaves are entirely cured they continue to draw moisture from the stem, thereby ensuring a more uniform curing.

Occasionally the baling of lucerne hay direct from the field has been attempted in Central Otago, but this operation has rarely been satisfactory, heating taking place in the bales. It is much better practice to stack the lucerne first, and bale from the stack when it is from six to eight weeks or more in age. If heating is to be avoided in baling direct from the field the hay requires to be thoroughly cured. The result is a hard hay with loss of leaf, and rarely warrants the saving of the double handling.

One of the big drawbacks to growing lucerne in extensive areas in Central Otago is the difficulty of obtaining labour to carry out harvesting operations. The average farmer has not the capital necessary to pay the high ruling rate of harvesters' wages, nor can he reasonably be expected to have a full equipment of up-to-date labour-saving devices. By co-operative endeavour much can be done to reduce the cost of harvesting, but it is to the farmer's own benefit, particularly on the smaller farms where dairying is being conducted, to sow only sufficient lucerne to provide winter hay for the cows and horses, putting the bulk of the land under irrigated pasture.

The use of hay-sweeps and derricks certainly reduces the amount of labour in harvesting and permits the building of large stacks. These are to be preferred to small stacks, as a smaller proportion of the hay is exposed to the elements.

LUCERNE AS A PASTURE.

Irrigated lucerne is essentially a hay crop, but occasionally it is used as a pasture. The practice of depasturing an irrigated stand of lucerne, on account of the liability of cattle and sheep to become "blown," presents considerable difficulties, and great care has to be exercised to prevent hungry stock from gorging themselves rapidly. In general the grazing of irrigated lucerne is not recommended, and should be confined to either the grazing of very early spring growth or the last crop of the season. The common practice of grazing the last crop or roughage of lucerne in the autumn may be regarded as quite sound practice, provided care is taken not to graze too closely. The plants should be allowed to go into winter with some growth upon the crowns, thus enabling them to stand the winter better, and also to store up reserve food material for a vigorous growth in the following spring. Where grazing is carried out the ground should be frequently cultivated with a spring-tooth harrow to loosen up the overconsolidated soil resulting from the trampling of stock.