

SEASONAL NOTES.

THE FARM.

TILLAGE OPERATIONS.

THE preparation of land for autumn sowing of grass and for catch-cropping—as dealt with in last month's notes—may be continued during February. When selecting the area to be sown down to grass one should avoid, if possible, land which has just produced a grain crop. This is of particular importance in parts of Canterbury this season, where the ravage of the grass-grub in the wheat crops has been evident. It is best to follow up with grass after some fed-off crop such as rape. Where cereals are to be autumn-sown in grain-growing districts the land selected—either stubble or lea—should be skim-ploughed as early as possible.

The intercultivation of root crops should be continued unless the crop is too far advanced and it is impossible to get through without damage. An extra cultivation often means all the difference between a light yield and a heavy crop of roots. Potatoes will receive their final intercultivation, but if large-growing weeds tend to get away in the crop after this operation is finished it will be advisable to remove them as far as possible by hand. Keep the team busy on summer-fallowed land; it will take all the sunshine available to kill out any twitch.

SOWING OF SECONDARY BURNS.

Should favourable weather conditions prevail during the next few weeks occupiers of unploughable bush land will have a chance to clean areas that have reverted to fern and second growth. Indiscriminate patch-burning is not to be recommended, but if a little money can be spent much can be done in a dry autumn. Where the fern is not too thick, and there is still a fair proportion of grass existing, top-dressing may be all that is required, provided that the grazing can be effectively controlled. Land that has completely reverted, however, must be resown as well as top-dressed.

Bracken fern is not difficult to burn, provided a suitable wind is utilized, but hard fern should only be burnt in a really dry season, otherwise the roots will not be completely destroyed and a ring of fresh growth will spring up. Water-fern is the hardest of all to burn, and is best checked by logging-up, coupled with top-dressing and heavy stocking with cattle. Wineberry is best cut in December and January, and manuka a little earlier.

Heavy sowing is not necessary for successful regrassing—in fact, it is a waste of money to spend much on seed of the better grasses which have already shown that they find the conditions too severe. Cocksfoot in particular is most unsatisfactory for resowing, though a certain number of suppressed plants will survive the fire and show up when the manure takes effect. Rye-grass should be used only to throw early feed. Experience has shown that brown-top and crested dogstail are two of the best species for this work. *Danthonia* should be included in nearly all cases, also *paspalum* in localities within