

## FARMERS' FIELD COMPETITIONS.

TARANAKI-WANGANUI DISTRICTS. SEASON 1927-28.

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FARMERS' field competitions were conducted last season in the Taranaki-Wanganui districts on much the same lines as in the preceding year. Entries judged showed an increase of 102, the figures being 370 against 268. The increase was mostly confined to North Taranaki, where Mr. J. M. Smith, Instructor in Agriculture, has been giving this branch of educational work special attention.

Haystack competitions were introduced for the first time, and forty-six stacks were judged. The number of ensilage entries judged showed an increase. The entries in both hay and ensilage were large, but owing to the mild winter a great number of the stacks and pits had not been opened, and therefore could not be judged. This particular type of competition is very popular, and is sure to increase in the future, as the value of good ensilage and well-saved hay is becoming more and more realized.

A falling-off in the number of lucerne stands judged is accounted for by the extremely dry weather experienced during judging-time (January and February), when most farmers who had lucerne growing had to make heavy demands on it in order to keep their stock going. Lucerne in South Taranaki and ensilage in North Taranaki saved the situation on a great many farms during the dry period from January to March.

The actual numbers of entries judged in the various competitions were as follows, last year's figures being shown in parentheses: Mangolds, 97 (90); carrots, 62 (61); swedes, 73 (49); turnips, 9 (9); lucerne, 8 (16); chou moellier, 8 (6); ensilage, 67 (37); hay, 46 (nil).

### MANGOLDS.

The long dry spell greatly checked the mangold crop in the early stages, but on the whole this root upheld its reputation as a drought-resister, and when the rain did come it made a wonderful recovery. The ninety-seven crops judged averaged 60 tons 6 cwt. per acre, against 59 tons 13 cwt. in the preceding season and 59 tons 14 cwt. in 1925-26.

The heaviest crop for the season under review was that grown by J. B. Hine, of Toko, which weighed 122 tons 13 cwt. per acre and won the Sutton Cup for North Taranaki. Mr. Hine having won this cup for the third year in succession now wins it outright. The heaviest crop in South Taranaki was grown by H. Betts, sen., and turned the scales at 106 tons 2 cwt. per acre. This crop wins the Sutton Cup for South Taranaki. Mr. Betts also grew the best crop in South Taranaki in 1926-27 (128 tons 19 cwt.) and gained the award for the Sutton Cup, which he afterwards lost on a technical point as to the date of entry. To compensate him for this the donors of the cup, Sutton and Sons, through their New Zealand agents, J. G. Ward and Co., Ltd., presented Mr. Betts with a gold medal. Mr. Betts, who is now in his ninety-second year, has set an example for some of the younger competitors by saying that he is going to win the Sutton Cup outright if he has to