

## SEASONAL NOTES.

### THE FARM.

#### Provision of Reserves of Feed.

THE report of the Dairy Industry Commission, 1934, contains the following statement: "It can be fairly stated that the quality of our dairy cows at the present time is, on the average, better than the efficiency displayed in their management and feeding." In practice this statement has been given much less attention than it warrants. It enunciates a truth which much evidence from the field shows is applicable equally to our sows and to our breeding-ewes. This truth provides important guidance in the drawing-up of a programme of the work of the coming year in respect to the provision of special feed. At this season with distinct advantage such a programme may be drawn up tentatively; although it is likely to be advisable to modify such a programme later because of developments which could not have been foreseen, it may be expected to be of service in the meantime in the making of decisions about such matters as the location of fences and of silage pits or trenches and the arranging of cultivation work, all of which should be planned as soon as possible so that labour may be provided for them from now onwards as opportunity offers.

Useful guidance in drafting a programme of special feed provision lies in the fact that in the past provision as a rule has been distinctly inadequate. Inadequate supplies of feed to supplement that available directly from pastures in winter and early spring usually lead to two distinctly undesirable results, one of which, while much less obvious than the other, is probably more serious. The more obvious of these results is a poorer return from live-stock, frequently due in part at least to greater incidence of disease. Important aspects of this relative to sheep-farming were discussed in this column in February last, while in regard to dairying it must suffice now to state that there is a general agreement that losses from a wide range of troubles are magnified as the result of poor feeding in winter and early spring—*e.g.*, losses due to udder troubles and to internal animal parasites.

#### Poor Feed-reserves inseparable from Poor Utilization.

The other serious though generally not so apparent result originates in the fact that inadequate provision of reserves of feed for use in the winter and early spring is inseparable from poor utilization of that grassland: if such reserves are too meagre the farmer is forced either to overstock his pastures in winter and early spring or to understock them in summer or, what is more common, both to overstock and to understock them at the respective seasons specified. In all three cases poor utilization is an inescapable result. To understand the full bearing of this it is necessary to recall that recent important advances in our knowledge of grass-farming relate to the basic importance of utilization of feed from grassland as a factor governing the returns from that grassland. Hanley, of the School of Agriculture of Cambridge University, touches on one aspect of this matter in the January, 1937, *Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, England, in stating:—

"Though fertilizer applications can do much to ensure a satisfactory amount of good-quality herbage, other points in management, especially the density and periods of stocking, have frequently a much more immediate and pronounced effect on the productivity of a pasture."