



Fig. 1.—Valuable stock-feed left to rot.

Converting Surplus Potatoes Into Valuable Stock Feed.

Utilizing Potato Silage to Eliminate Waste of Crops.

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GROWERS of potatoes in New Zealand are periodically faced with a surplus crop for which they have no sale and no alternate way of disposal. On such occasions many tons of potatoes are wasted when they could be converted into valuable feed for all classes of stock. This state of affairs has arisen this year in Canterbury, and in many instances potatoes could be obtained for pig-feeding by those who would take the trouble to cart the tubers.

This does not occur every year, but there are men who grow large areas of potatoes regularly and after sorting and grading have a large quantity of pig potatoes on hand for which they have no immediate use. Generally, these potatoes are left to become soft and useless.

This is particularly so in the late spring and in cases where the grower has held his potatoes in the hope that the price will improve. By this time there is plenty of other feed for his stock, and the pig potatoes are left to rot. If these surplus potatoes had been available in the previous winter, or if they could be

Surplus potatoes which are often wasted can easily be converted into valuable feed for all classes of stock. Potato silage, for instance, offers a cheap and valuable source of feed by preserving the surplus potatoes for future use. Several methods of making this silage are described in this article.

preserved until the following winter, they would be a valuable feed for all classes of stock.

Two Methods.

The problem of surplus potatoes is not peculiar to New Zealand but is present from time to time in Britain and in Northern European countries. There the position has been met by making potato silage. Two methods of silage-making are used. One is to preserve

the potatoes by placing them in layers in grass silage stacked in the usual way. This method gives a type of silage suitable for stock other than pigs.

The second method is by preserving the potatoes in pits either after cooking them or by slicing and pitting the raw potatoes with a small quantity of fermented maize-meal. The latter methods give a type of silage suitable for pigs and all other classes of stock. Not only can sound potatoes be used for silage, but damaged or slightly diseased tubers can also be used, provided they are cooked.

Unfortunately, Canterbury makes very little grass silage for its stock, and the amount of potatoes that would be saved at present by this method would be very small. There is no reason, however, why the other types of silage cannot be made, and where too small a quantity of the tubers are available for pitting they can be successfully preserved in oil-drums or discarded water-tanks. A thin layer of the surface material becomes unpalatable through exposure to the air, but underneath this layer the silage will be quite good.