



A double-cut tractor mower at work on a lucerne paddock in the Seddon district.



Stationary baler and sweeps—a common sight during haymaking.

the place eats it, except the hired girl, and she ain't been here long enough."

In the past, even with a limited supply of labour and without the proper facilities, the harvesting of lucerne has undoubtedly presented difficulties, but, as in many other avenues of production, modern machinery has come forward to undertake the work. Examples of this machinery now being used in Marlborough give an idea how far lucerne harvesting has progressed from

the methods used in the days of our American friend.

First in line comes the tractor mower. Recently one was observed making an excellent job and cutting two swathes at the same time. In this way a standing crop is soon "laid low" with a minimum of time and effort. Experience has proved that this is a most efficient method of cutting the lucerne, and the work is accomplished rapidly at low cost.

Another machine which is being used extensively is the hay tedder. This does the work of taking the cut lucerne from the swathe and placing it in windrows, where the drying takes place. Turning of the swathe is also easily accomplished by this machine, which is an asset to any farm where hay is made. Previously lucerne in Marlborough was generally swept up out of the swathe and pressed in a stationary power baler. This method has much to commend it, but the pick-up power baler has now made its appearance, and although it has scarcely been in operation long enough to allow farmers to become thoroughly acquainted with its capabilities, a considerable amount of hay was made by this method last season. This machine picks up the lucerne hay direct from the windrow, and the bales are pressed, wired, and dropped in the paddock, from which they can be collected by lorry.

Using the methods outlined, the saving in labour is enormous, and the once arduous task of cutting, sweeping, and stacking is greatly simplified. With such harvesting facilities available, there are few crops that can compare with lucerne, which presents a most attractive financial proposition to the individual farmer. Probably no other crop is so sure in its return when once established or has so many avenues for exploitation.

Lucerne is an excellent green fodder and produces the highest quality hay and, being a legume, it improves the soil by supplying nitrogen. During dry conditions the value of this crop is most apparent when good grass paddocks may be seen "burnt-off," while lucerne almost invariably presents a green, thriving appearance. Lastly, as a seed crop, lucerne can give wonderful returns.

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