



Farm Management Under Irrigation

Four Basic Principles Are Essential to Success

TWO small irrigation schemes already operate in South Canterbury, but within a year or so large areas will be reticulated in Canterbury following the completion of the big Rangitata Works. These works are costly undertakings for so small a country, but while the initial cost is necessarily high, it will be considered small when the future advantages are taken into account.

If, however, the greatest advantages are to accrue from irrigation, the fullest possible use must be made of the water. This can be done only if at the very start we realise that the irrigation schemes were constructed in Canterbury for the sole object of supplementing a low rainfall. Many farmers view irrigation as a drought remedy only—that is, that the farms will not be made dependent on irrigation, but that the present system of dry land farming which has been evolved to fit into a natural environment will carry on and that irrigation will be called on only to tide over an unusually dry period.

There are four basic principles about irrigation which the farmer must remember.

(1) Good Pasture Is Keynote to Success

The first step towards success in irrigation—and this applies equally to farming in general—is the establishment and maintenance of good pastures. In pastoral or agricultural farming the good grass and clover paddock is the keynote to success. It carries and fattens the sheep, it builds and repairs the fertility. In just the same way as it is false economy to spend good time and money in cultivation and then sow poor strains of grass and clover, so it is false economy to irrigate poorly-established and run-out pastures. The greatest returns from expenditure on irrigation will result if the water is used to grow grasses and clovers and not weeds.

This question of good pastures is of paramount importance, and if the

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It cannot be stressed too strongly that irrigation must not be viewed and adopted merely as a standby in times of a drought, and the farmer must realise this if he is to get profit from the use of water. In Canterbury the ultimate aim should be farms of high production dependent on the continual use of water. The intensive use of irrigation will so increase the carrying capacity of the land that the stage will be reached where the water, in effect, becomes the life blood of the farms.

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