Time to Harvest The Crop

Although weather conditions do not allow any set date of cutting to be predetermined, crops may be regarded as being ready to cut when 80 per cent. of the heads are completely brown. No attempt should be made to wait for the whole crop to ripen, as by the time this has taken place the season will be well advanced and much of the seed already set will have shaken and possibly sprouted.

On the lighter soils crops are usually ready to cut about the middle of March, or earlier in dry seasons. Seed crops on the heavier soils are not usually ready to cut until the end of March or sometimes even late in April.

Methods of Cutting

Three methods of cutting the drop are in use. These are:—

(1) The field mower.
(2) Side delivery mower.
(3) Header harvester.

(1) THE FIELD MOWER.

The majority of crops are cut with the field mower. This may be attributed, in part, to the fact that it is largely satisfactory, and in part to the fact that a mower is already standard equipment of most farms. This second point is important, especially when areas to be dealt with are not large. In good average crops the mower makes a good clean job, leaving a minimum amount of material on the ground, and causing a minimum of shattering.

In heavy crops it is usually necessary to have an extra man on hand to clean knife and shedder blockages. With short crops, the mower in its ordinary conditions leaves much to be desired because of the difficulty of picking up the cut material. To overcome this difficulty, many attachments are fitted to mowers, most of them home-made. These range from two sacks trailing behind the knife to a more elaborate apparatus, the clover buncher. Many of the attachments work satisfactorily, provided the time and labour factors are not important. The clover buncher, however, deals admirably with very short crops, provided a certain amount of grass seed stalk is also present. It also has the advantage that it can be worked economically by one man in light crops.

(2) THE SIDE DELIVERY MOWER.

The great advantage of the side delivery mower is its ability to cut the crop and swing the cut portion out of the danger of damage in the subsequent round. It also leaves the cut herbage in a comparatively narrow or bunched windrow with the heads up, which makes for easier subsequent handling. In addition, no turning is necessary, even under bad weather conditions.

In good average crops which are not badly tangled the side delivery mower is excellent. On very heavy crops difficulty may be experienced, as the arms are not powerful enough to separate the crop even when every arm is sweeping the board.

(3) HEADER HARVESTER.

During the past few years the header harvester has been used to an increasingly large extent for the handling of Montgomery red clover seed crops, particularly in South Canterbury.

Any crop must be absolutely dry or "rotten ripe" if it is to be direct headed efficiently, and this condition, it must be remembered, is hard to obtain in a normal season in much of South Otago and Southland.

While direct heading of Montgomery red clover is carried out, it is most satisfactory on the lighter land and on old stands. The habit of the plant of sometimes remaining green even after the seed head is ripened prevents the practice from becoming general. Headers are, however, used with the pick-up attachment to harvest either from the swath or from side delivery cocks. If good judgment is used and threshing takes place only during the

North Island Lambing Estimates

Current Season is Highest Since 1933

LAMBING estimates in the North Island for the current season are estimated at 90.74 per cent.—the highest since 1933, when the season's estimate of 91.23 per cent. proved slightly better than the actual lambing.

From information supplied by the various Inspectors of Stock, the average rate of lambing for the current season in North Island flocks is estimated at 90.74 per cent., compared with 89.01 per cent. in 1940.

With 11,268,384 breeding ewes in the North Island, as shown in the 1941 sheep return, the estimated number of lambs is 10,224,786. Previous estimates have for some years underestimated the actual number of lambs tailed, so that it is probable last year's record total will be exceeded this season.

Dominion returns by counties, and the South Island estimates, will be published in next month's issue of the "Journal."

The following is the estimated percentage of lambing in the North Island for the year 1941, and a statement for the previous five years showing also the actual number of lambs tailed.

District.	Breeding Ewes.	Estimated Percentage of Lambs.	Estimated Number of Lambs.
Auckland	2,715,473	93.00	2,525,556
East Coast—Hawke's Bay	4,337,477	87.39	3,790,601
West Coast—Wellington	4,215,434	92.72	3,908,629
NORTH ISLAND TOTALS:	11,268,384	90.74	10,224,786

Year.	Number of Breeding Ewes.	Estimated Average Lambing Percentage.	Estimated Number of Lambs.	Actual Number of Lambs Tailed.
1940	10,917,684	89.01	9,717,488	10,348,649
1939	10,889,802	84.40	9,190,994	9,476,647
1938	10,735,829	80.11	8,600,625	9,034,385
1937	10,570,388	86.52	9,145,849	9,401,496
1936	10,300,826	90.50	9,322,476	9,387,749