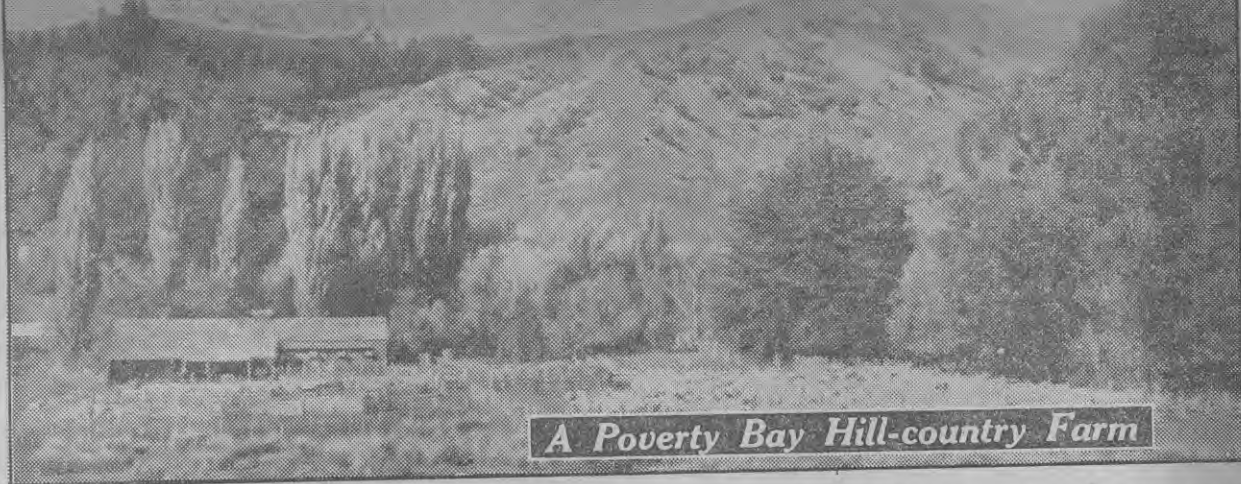


# STUDIES IN FARM MANAGEMENT



**A Poverty Bay Hill-country Farm**

**T**HROUGHOUT New Zealand there are many districts which have hill-country farm lands ideally suited to the raising of sheep and cattle, and in this respect Poverty Bay and the east coast are particularly favoured. The rich, fertile papa and mudstone soils combined with an adequate rainfall lend themselves to the development of highly-productive hill-country pastures. As a result breeding ewes and cattle raised on the Poverty Bay and east coast hills are always in very keen demand by buyers from other districts. The following article describes the management of a typical hill-country farm in the Cook County, Poverty Bay.

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**W**ITH no extremes of hot and cold and having only mild frosts—an isolated one perhaps reaches 10 degrees—the climate of the Cook County is ideal for farming. The average annual rainfall is 43.4in., with a minimum of 26in. and a maximum of 60in. Generally the hill country receives more rain than the coastal area and the heaviest falls usually occur during May, June, July, and August, the average heaviest

fall being 5.12in. in May. During the rest of the year the rainfall normally is fairly evenly distributed.

## Soil Types

Hill-country soil is composed largely of papa, argillaceous mudstones, and some sandstones, and the soil of the rich alluvial flats is derived from papa and mudstone. Along the river banks the soil has been formed largely by flood silting.

Generally the soils on the flats respond readily to topdressing with phosphates and have sufficient free calcium for plant food requirements. However, in certain areas, before maximum results can be obtained from phosphates, carbonate of lime has to be applied to correct the soil's condition.

### Statistical Data, Cook County\*

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Total occupied area (acres) .. ..        | 501,295 |
| Number of horses .. ..                   | 3,384   |
| Number of cattle .. ..                   | 103,688 |
| Number of dairy cows in milk .. ..       | 9,797   |
| Number of pigs .. ..                     | 4,608   |
| Number of sows 1 year old and over .. .. | 684     |
| Number of sheep shorn .. ..              | 688,006 |
| Number of lambs shorn .. ..              | 232,773 |
| Number of lambs tailed .. ..             | 370,446 |

\* A. and P. statistics, 1943-44.

## A MURIWAI FARM

Although the farm has a greater area of flats for fattening stock than is usual, the management of the property of Messrs. C. H. and H. C. Williams is typical of that of most farms in the

Cook County. Situated a quarter of a mile from the township of Muriwai, which is 16 miles from Gisborne on the main Gisborne-Napier highway, the farm was originally part of the Wairakaia Estate of 9,000 acres, which was purchased by Archdeacon Samuel Williams in 1905 and subdivided into five properties. The Williams brothers took over two adjacent blocks, which they have since farmed on a communal basis.

The two blocks, known as Sherwood and Coventry, were about 2,200 acres and 1,740 acres respectively, a total of 3,940 acres. Some years later 60 acres of alluvial flats were purchased, bringing the total acreage of the holdings up to 4,000 acres.

When Messrs. Williams commenced farming the property in 1905 most of the bush, which consisted largely of kohe-kohe, rewarewa, tawa, and kawkawa, had been felled and burnt and the area sown down in English grasses. Several remaining areas of native bush aggregating 200 acres were, with the exception of a small area, felled, burnt, and sown down during the next five years.

When the property was taken over the paddocks were very large and the fences in an almost complete state of disrepair. The whole area had to be subdivided and new boundary fences erected. Within a few years all sign of the original fencing had disappeared.

The pastures, even though sown down in English grasses, were at that time dominantly danthonia. Owing to the large extent of individual paddocks, much of the growth was uncontrolled and the properties were covered with rank native grass or Yorkshire fog.

## Planned Development

It was realised early that to encourage grasses and clovers demanding higher fertility it was essential to have the pastures well

