

... AN OTOROHANGA DAIRY FARM

Friesians being confined mainly to the farms situated on the meadow soil type. There are some good stud herds of each breed, and the progeny command good prices at the annual sales.

There appears to be no great preference for either Polled Angus or Herefords for fattening, but on sheep farms Polled Angus cows are predominant and are mated with either a Polled Angus or a Hereford sire.

Sheep

The Romney is the predominant sheep breed. On the hill country the Romney ram is used almost exclusively, but on the fat lamb farms both South-downs and Romneys are used. Every year large numbers of 4- and 5-year-old Romney ewes are brought in from the Waitomo and Kawhia districts, but recently there has been a tendency toward breeding flock replacements on the larger fat lamb farms. Some dairy farmers raise fat lambs as a sideline and also fatten forward store lambs bought in the autumn.

Pigs

As home separation of cream is the main method of treating milk, the feeding of the skim-milk to pigs is an important branch of dairy farming. The skim-milk is fed with meals or grains to the fattening pigs, which are usually styed to be finished. Store pigs are also supplemented with skim-milk and meals but are allowed greater use of pasture. Though many farmers over-winter store pigs on pasture, home-grown crops, and meals, there are still too many who rely on buying stores and weaners at the saleyards in the spring at very high prices.

The most popular breeds are Tamworth, Large Black, and Berkshire, and there are several good pedigree studs of these breeds. Undoubtedly the most popular cross is the Large Black boar mated with the Tamworth sow, the progeny developing into a large, long animal. The Large White has not gained in popularity; only rarely are white pigs seen in the local pig market.

STATISTICAL DATA: OTOROHANGA COUNTY, 1943-44

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| Total occupied area | .. 191,889 acres |
| Area in pasture | .. 136,890 acres |
| Area cut for hay and silage | 12,365 acres |
| Area under annual crops | 3,980 acres |
| Dairy cows in milk | .. 31,416 |
| Other cattle | .. 35,592 |
| Sheep shorn | .. 192,376 |
| Pigs | .. 14,590 |
| Number of holdings | .. 747 |
| Average area of holdings | 257 acres |

AN OTOROHANGA DAIRY FARM

Mr. F. T. Wyllie's dairy farm is 3 miles north-east of Otorohanga on the main highway. In 1924 Mr. Wyllie bought his farm of 85 acres with a leasehold of an adjoining area of 45 acres, the freehold of which he obtained in 1928, giving him a total area of 130 acres. When he acquired the property 120 acres were in grass and the remainder still in bracken fern and manuka. This property is one of the older developed farms of the central

area. However, it had been farmed for what could be taken out of it, and the condition of the pastures was so poor that only with considerable difficulty was he able to winter 50 dairy cows in 1924.

For the first few years Mr. Wyllie had to pay considerable attention to the pastures, and he found that about 5 years were required to obtain a satisfactory sward. The soil is the typical brown loam of the central area of the county, and the country is undulating with shallow valleys which provide a little natural shelter for the stock. The farm was not well subdivided, there was no planted shelter, and only a very poor water supply.

Realising that he could not expect to obtain the maximum production from his herd under these conditions, Mr. Wyllie immediately embarked on a programme of development and herd improvement. Each year from 3 to 5 acres of the poorer pastures were ploughed up, cropped with swedes for winter feeding, followed by a catch crop of soft turnips for summer feeding, and then sown to pasture in the autumn. Subdivision was also proceeded with and now there are 23 fields. The fences erected have 3 posts

to the chain, 4 battens between each post, and 6 wires, 3 of which are barbed—top, bottom, and fourth from the bottom. With the barbed wire in that order there is no possible chance of the battens getting out of position or the cattle pushing between the wires.

In 1924 there was not a tree of any description on the property and the next year a start was made with the planting of shelter belts of *Lawsoniana* and macrocarpa. They were fenced on both sides, and the draught-proof qualities of the belts show that this policy has been warranted.

In 1935 a start was made with planting barberry and now about 104 chains have been planted. A spade spit was removed, a barberry plant put in each end of the spade cut, and the spit replaced. To deter the cattle from eating the young plants, cow manure from the shed was placed around the plants just before the cattle were turned into the field. The odour of the manure kept the cattle away and the manure supplied plant food to the barberry, which made rapid growth. These barberry belts are allowed to grow about 1ft. above normal fence height, and are trimmed every fourth year.

PLAN OF FARM

