

# AN OTOROHANGA DAIRY FARM . . .

## Cropping

About 3 acres of swedes have been sown practically every year. The land is ploughed in August and allowed to lie fallow till it is surface worked with discs and harrows during October and November. The crop is sown in the first week of December, the rate of seeding being 12oz. an acre and the fertiliser 3cwt. of superphosphate and 2 to 3cwt. of ground limestone.

In the spring, after grazing off of the swedes, the area is ploughed and worked, and a catch crop of soft turnips sown in late October. Three-quarters to 1 acre is sown in a quick-maturing variety, usually Purple Top Mammoth, and the balance in Hardy Green Globe. Rates of seeding and fertiliser are the same as for the swede crop.

## Water Supply

One of the early major works was the installation and extension of the water supply. In 1924 there was a dam near the centre of the farm and a windmill operating over a 35-foot dug well supplying one trough near the cowshed. With the coming of electric power in 1926 a deep well was put down at the cowshed. The water is pumped into a 3000-gallon concrete tank and reticulated over the whole farm from this reservoir. By 1927 every field had a supply of good water in a concrete trough.

## The Dairy Herd

In 1924 Mr. Wyllie began milking with a grade Jersey herd of 50 cows. He produced 11,400lb. of butterfat and reared 15 calves, which is equivalent to about 235lb. of butterfat a cow. In 1925 he began testing, and the following figures have been supplied by the Herd Testing Association:—

Season	Cows	lb. of fat
1925-26	49	263
1926-27	54	335
1927-28	56	297
1928-29	57	296
1929-30	62	328
1930-31	66	277
1931-32	66	318
1932-33	Not tested	
1933-34	70	323
1934-35	Not tested	
1935-36	71	372
1936-37	71	367
1937-38	71	330
1938-39*	77	283
1939-40	74	341
1940-41	74	363
1941-42	74	360
1942-43	77	344
1943-44	71	335
1944-45	72	359
1945-46†	74	287

\* Drought year: 241-day test

† Drought year: 259-day test

On this farm the production for the 1945-46 season was one-sixth less than the average of the preceding 3 years, whereas the figures for many herds in the county were down by half or more on the

1944-45 season. During the dry period of 1946 the pastures never reached the burnt-out stage—no doubt because of the protection from drying winds afforded them by the excellent shelter belts.

## Pedigree Cattle

In 1929 a start was made on the breeding of a pedigree herd by buying a rising 2-year-old heifer, Kimberley Josey, in calf to Hawkesbury Gale, and this matron has left some outstanding progeny which form the backbone of the present herd, of which 20 are pedigrees. Her first calf, a bull, proved a very successful sire, three of his daughters as third calvers producing more than 500lb. of butterfat under ordinary herd conditions. Kimberley Josey's pedigree goes back to the well-known imported sire Majesty Fox. She is now 19 years of age and has produced a calf every year except one. She may be considered the foundation of the present herd, as her sons were used for mating with unrelated cows and her daughters and their female progeny have been kept for the herd.

In the early years of the establishment of the herd considerable success was achieved by the use of a very well-bred sire, Pinewoods Standard Gold. A recently-purchased sire, Maori Achievement, a son of Maori Barber, was bred by Mr. C. H. Lepper, Taranaki. This young sire has excellent butterfat backing on both sides of his family and Mr. Wyllie is hopeful that his already good butterfat production will be maintained if not increased in his progeny. The sires are mated from October 8 onward and finish their season by the last week in December.

Herd replacements are all bred on the farm, and each year about 12 heifers are put into the herd. The dairy stock on the farm for the winter of 1946 was 74 cows, 20 rising 2-year-old heifers, 28 yearling heifers, and 4 bulls. Surplus stock are disposed of as rising 2-year-olds.

## Calves

The policy has been to raise all heifer calves and bull calves of pedigree parentage. Calves are fed new milk until they are 6 weeks old, when they are gradually weaned on to skim-milk at 9 weeks. No meals or calf foods are fed while they are on fresh milk, but at 9 weeks they are given a dry ration of crushed lucerne hay, oats, peas, and linseed meal. Rock salt is also placed where they have ready access to it.

At 4 months the calves are weaned from the skim-milk-dry meal ration and put on to good pasture, usually the aftermath of silage cutting. During the winter they are fed a liberal ration of good hay.

## Pig Keeping

The keeping of pigs has not been specialised in but has been considered a necessary sideline to dairy farming. The piggery consists of 6 pens and there are 9 pig houses of the lean-to type. Sixteen to 20 store pigs are wintered with the 6 sows on pasture, skim-milk, roots, molasses, and a little barley meal. Meat meal is fed to the sows with piglets at foot and to the suckling piglets and weaners.

Matings are arranged so that the sows farrow about the first week of July and January. When the cows are dried off surplus porkers or stores above winter requirements are disposed of. About 50 baconers are fattened each year.

The sows are mainly Tamworths, which are mated to a Large Black boar. Mr. Wyllie recently bought an in-pig Large White sow, which produced 11 piglets, and it is his intention to retain 2 sows of this litter for breeding.

## Implements

All the implements are horse drawn and 3 good working horses are kept as well as 2 hacks. The following range of implements is sufficient to work the farm:—

2 single-furrow ploughs	1 sledge with hay frame
1 side-delivery rake and tedder	1 topdresser
1 4-wheel 2-horse sweep	1 2-horse mower
1 set of 3-leaf tine harrows	1 stacker
1 set of 3-horse discs	1 set of tripod and chain harrows
1 2-horse pole wagon	1 9ft. roller
	1 cow manure sledge

## Buildings

There are two houses for the owner and his staff; one cowshed with a 4-cow milking plant, deep well pump, skim-milk pump, and 90-gallon separator; one feed shed with 2 loose boxes used for housing new-born calves or sick animals; and a large combined implement and manure shed.

## Labour

The milking, washing up, and feeding of calves and pigs are done by the married couple and the owner or his daughter. No extra labour is engaged for silage gathering, but a neighbour assists at the hay harvest.

## Conclusion

Undoubtedly Mr. Wyllie has achieved a very high standard of farming and has put into operation many of the best principles. He has always practised early ploughing and thorough cultivation of the land for roots or grass, the early cutting of silage and hay fields to ensure good aftermaths, the planting of adequate shelter, and the careful selection and rearing of stock.