PREPARATION OF HONEY FOR MARKET

On the right is a jar of clear honey as extracted from combs. The honey in the jar on the left has been granulated after processing. The three containers in the centre are suitable for retail markets.

After it has been allowed to settle for an hour or so it should be thoroughly skimmed to remove froth and fine particles of wax. It can then be put into clean jars. Honey packed in this manner always looks most attractive.

Temperature Factor

Commercial beekeepers have found that the only satisfactory way of placing granulated honey on the market soon after extraction is to install a cooling room to create conditions favourable to quick granulation, thus ensuring a smooth-grained product. Though the domestic beekeeper cannot afford this expense, he can turn out a very good-conditioned honey if he is prepared to wait for cooler weather, generally after March. This means that after extraction the honey should be run into 60lb. tins. As soon as cooler weather is experienced with temperatures dropping below 50 degrees in the evening a beginning can be made to recondition the honey before packing it into retail containers.

Straining

A small tank fitted with a honey gate will be required. If none is available, the honey extractor could be used if the baskets and revolving mechanism were taken out. The inside of the extractor should be given a good clean. On top of the extractor a piece of fine muslin or strainer cloth should be tied securely. If the cloth is new, it should be given a good wash to remove any dressing.

The honey in the 60lb. tins will require to be warmed before it is strained; also granulation will probably have begun and sufficient heat to melt the coarse crystals will be required. The household copper is suitable for holding a 60lb. tin. The honey should be brought to a temperature of about 120 degrees F. Stirring at intervals will help to hasten the warming-up process.

When thoroughly liquid the honey is poured over the strainer into the tank. Make sure the honey gate is closed. The honey should be allowed to settle in the tank for about 12 to 24 hours. Any froth that has come to the surface can then be skimmed off.

Granulation

The next process is to granulate the honey with a fine, smooth grain. About 6lb. of starter to every hundredweight of honey is required. Starter honey is a smooth-grained honey retained from the previous season or bought from a source where the honey is known to be suitable. If this honey is very hard, it can be slightly warmed to allow it to be broken down into a stiff paste. It should not be overheated or the smooth grains will be destroyed.

This starter is now placed in the tank with the rest of the honey and well stirred to get it evenly incorporated. The honey should be well stirred several times a day. If the temperatures are right, in 2 or 3 days the honey should have become quite cloudy and stiff and is ready to put into containers for the retail market.

Honey will readily absorb moisture from the air and should always be kept well covered.

Book Review

"Competitive Farming": M. McG. Cooper

PROFESSOR M. McG. COOPER is a New Zealander who was educated at Massey Agricultural College and for some time lectured at that College. In 1947 he was appointed Professor of Agriculture at Wye College (University of London), Kent, and in 1954 Dean of Agriculture, University of Durham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. At both of his appointments in England he has had large farms under his management and is well qualified to speak on both theoretical and practical grounds on a wide range of agricultural matters in New Zealand and England.

Professor Cooper uses his wide experience to advantage in this book. He lives up to his reputation of being outspoken, particularly concerning weaknesses in the efficiency of English farming methods and the dangers of reliance on high farming subsidies. He draws heavily on his New Zealand experience and makes many comparisons between farming, marketing, research, and extension methods in New Zealand and Great Britain. Most of these comparisons are to the advantage of New Zealand and perhaps Professor Cooper has been somewhat over-critical of certain aspects of the farming picture in England and sees the corresponding conditions in New Zealand in too favourable a light. A New Zealander might wonder why there has not been a large migration of farmers from Great Britain to New Zealand. Perhaps it is the subsidies that keep them in England.

The book is written primarily for the British farmer and farming administrator and will probably have a rather limited appeal in New Zealand. For those familiar with British farming, however, it will be read with intense interest. These readers might not agree with all that is said, but they will surely admit that there is much that is sound common sense and that needed to be said. Time after time the author warns against the dangers of supporting inefficiency with farming subsidies. He shows the folly of too great a reliance on imported feeding stuffs and the corresponding neglect to grow and use grassland to the best advantage.

It would be interesting to read a book on New Zealand farming by a British author with as wide an experience of both countries as Professor Cooper's.

—*P.B.L.*

Crosby Lockwood and Son Ltd., London. 10s.