



Farming at Boys' Training Centre, Levin

THE value of farm work for the self-discipline and team-work it requires, for its healthiness, and as a vocational training is fully recognised in the curriculum of the Boys' Training Centre at Levin. The training centre, an institution of the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Education, has a remarkable record of success in straightening out the lives of boys who have broken many of the established rules of social behaviour. Investigations of juvenile delinquency and adult crime shows that a majority of the boys who spend part of their growing-up years at the training centre do not get into trouble afterward.

UNTIL 1939 the Boys' Training Centre occupied a property at Weraroa on the southern outskirts of Levin, but now the training centre is on 160 acres of the former Central Development Farm, the forerunner of Massey Agricultural College. Another 60 acres, 3 miles away, is also farmed by the centre.

The principal feature of the farm is its pedigree Friesian dairy herd. The training centre is recorded in volume 1 of the New Zealand Friesian herd book as owning a bull born in 1904, but the stud really dates from 1932. No outside females have been introduced into the stud since that year. Sales of surplus stock are held every 2 years and attract buyers from all parts of New Zealand and from Australia. The training centre is a successful exhibitor at many of the lead-

ing shows in the southern part of the North Island.

Stock

The farm carries 90 to 100 cattle for the greater part of the year. Up to 50 cows are milked in the flush of the season, and 12 to 15 in winter, with an average approximate annual yield of 390lb. of butterfat. The farm supplies all the milk and cream requirements of the training centre and the surplus is separated and sent to the Levin dairy factory.

Though dryness is often a problem in summer and autumn, the growth of pasture, supplemented by hay and silage, swedes, and chou moellier, is sufficient to maintain the herd without using concentrates. An electric fence

is used to control grazing throughout winter and spring.

Hay and silage are grown on 50 to 60 acres, and 10 to 12 acres are usually planted in swedes and chou moellier. Three acres of potatoes are grown and a garden covering $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres supplies almost all the centre's vegetables. Buildings, recreation areas, and ornamental gardens cover about 20 acres.

The farm has 300 crossbred breeding ewes, which are mated with Southdown rams for fat lamb production. There are a small piggery and a poultry unit with 100 laying birds. Some of the centre's meat requirements are supplied by culled dairy cows and dry sheep.

The greater part of the farm is on the poorer land of the former Central Development Farm. With a light shingle soil it can best be described as good spring country; the soil's water-retaining properties are not

HEADING PHOTOGRAPH: Part of the pedigree Friesian dairy herd at the centre's farm. Sales of surplus stock at the farm attract buyers from all parts of New Zealand and from Australia.