

## On the Land

### GENERAL.

A large area of land is to be put down in wheat in the Masterton district this year (says an exchange). Settlers generally are displaying a patriotic desire to assist those in need of food by providing as much wheat as possible.

We understand (says the *Hawke's Bay Tribune*) that the Government has made a purchase of an estate, containing about 8000 acres, in the vicinity of the Shereden Settlement for closer settlement, and that the land will probably be put on the market early in March.

At the sheep sales in Sydney, one Handdon Rig merino ram fetched 290gs, others from 240gs to 250gs, and 10 averaged £159. Drafts of Romney Marsh and Leicester flock rams and ram lambs, on behalf of New Zealand breeders, ranged from £2 2s to £4 4s. Mr. Milliar, of Deniliquin Park, presented 189 rams to the Wounded Soldiers' Fund, and they fetched £1806.

At the Ruakura Farm of Instruction on the 2nd March six acres were sown down with white mustard as a green-manuring crop experiment on land which was last year devoted to cereal plot experiments, and there is no more striking experiment on the farm at the present time than this, showing the difference between the results obtained by following a barley crop as compared with an oat crop. The edges of the two plots are as much marked as if drawn with a line. The mustard following barley is from 6in. to 9in. high, while that following oats is 2ft high.

At Addington last week there was a moderate entry of fat stock. Fat cattle showed some improvement, and fat lambs sold at about previous week's rates. There was keen demand for store sheep, especially for hoggets and ewes, while fat sheep were finer. Fat Lambs.—Prime, 18s 6d to 24s 1d; medium, 15s to 18s; light and unfinished, 13s 6d to 14s 6d. Fat Sheep.—Extra prime wethers, to 30s; prime wethers, 22s to 27s 6d; others, 18s 9d to 21s 6d; merino wethers, 16s 5d to 17s; extra prime ewes, to 35s; prime ewes, 29s to 27s 6d; medium ewes, 16s to 19s 6d; inferior ewes, 12s 5d to 16s; merino ewes, 9s to 11s 5d. Fat Cattle.—Extra steers, to £17 17s 6d; ordinary steers, £8 to £11 12s 6d; extra heifers, to £14; ordinary heifers, £6 17s 6d to £9 10s; extra cows, £11 7s 6d; ordinary cows, £5 17s 6d to £9. Price of beef per 100lb, 25s to 37s 6d and extra to 40s. Pigs.—Choppers, 5s to 90s; extra heavy baconers, to 86s; heavy ba. mers, 70s to 75s; light baconers, 55s to 67s; price per lb, 5½d; heavy porkers, 38s to 45s; light porkers, 28s to 35s; price per lb, 5½d to 6d; medium stores, 22s to 28s; small stores, 16s to 21s; weaners, 3s (for very small) to 11s 6d (for good sorts); sows in pig, 4s to 52s 6d.

At Burnside last week 206 head of fat cattle were yarded. The entry consisted mostly of medium quality bullocks, cows, and heifers, with an odd pen of good heavy-weight cattle. For prime quality beef competition was keen, and prices were from 10s to 15s per head better than at previous sale. Medium quality cattle were not in such keen demand, and sold at late rates. Quotations: Prime bullocks, £15 10s to £17; extra, to £19 2s 6d; medium bullocks, £13 to £14; others, £11 to £12 10s; prime heifers and cows, £10 10s to £12; extra, to £14 2s 6d. Fat Sheep. 4172 yarded. A good yarding, consisting mainly of medium wethers and ewes, with a few pens of really prime wethers. The freezing buyers were operating, but they only had a limited space. There was fair competition throughout the sale, prices for prime wethers being, if anything, in advance of those ruling lately. Quotations: Extra prime wethers, 32s 9d; prime wethers, 26s to 28s 6d; medium wethers, 21s to 25s; light and inferior, to 18s; extra prime ewes, 37s 3d; prime ewes, 24s to 24s 6d; medium ewes, 17s to 19s 6d. Fat Lambs.—1343 yarded. A small yarding. There was keen competition between some export buyers who had limited freezing space and graziers. Prices were considerably better than those

ruling at last sale. Quotations: Best lambs, 19s to 21s; extra, to 25s; medium, 16s 6d to 18s. Pigs.—A small yarding, in consequence of which competition was very keen, and prices showed an all-round advance compared with previous week.

### THE VALUE OF GOOD-KEEPING BUTTER.

The preservative quality of butter enters very largely into the commercial value of the article when placed on the market. It is of no use for a merchant to buy, or a dairyman to make, butter unless it will keep in good condition for a reasonable length of time, providing, of course, that all due care is taken with it as regards efficient transit and storage. Butter at the end of at least ten days (says an exchange) should then be as sweet and palatable as on the day it was made. There are many causes for butter not keeping, the chief being faults in the process of manufacture. Amongst other things, the cream must be properly ripened. Most butter-makers sour the cream before churning, but many do not sour it to the correct extent, thinking that, as long as the cream has an acid flavor, it must rise.

When churning sweet or slightly acid cream it is impossible to make butter without its containing an excess of caseous matter, which proves detrimental to its keeping capacity. In such cases (where there is an excess of casein present) the butter, when freshly made, may be of good flavor, but soon goes 'off.' If the cream has been kept too long, it will probably be rancid before churning. The chief points in the manufacture are to ripen the cream to a nicety, and then churn it until small grains of butter are produced. It is then possible to wash from the butter a sufficient amount of the curdy matter, which, if not removed, decomposes, and spoils otherwise good keeping butter. A good brand of dairy salt, free from any foreign matter, is required. Good butter is often spoiled by inferior salt; also the water wants to be well worked out of it. An excess of water in butter assists the development of organisms, which bring about decomposition.

### GREEN MANURING.

Whether in the production of fodder or the raising of grain crops, the value of green manuring should not be ignored. Amongst the most effective methods of increasing the fertility of the soil is green manuring—that is, the ploughing under of a green crop. The beneficial action is twofold. It enriches the soil in the first place by supplying it with a considerable proportion of readily-available plant food; and in the second place, by adding humus, it improves the soil's texture and its power of absorbing and retaining moisture. By green manuring the surface soil becomes enriched by the nourishing materials which the crop during the period of its growth has drawn from the air and from the lower portions of the sub-soil, and this material is now placed within the reach of the growing plants.

During the growth of the green crop the soil, in addition, has been stirred up and disintegrated by the development of the roots. When ploughed under, provided then sufficient moisture and warmth are present, the buried mass decomposes with more or less rapidity, and the succeeding crop gets the benefit of the fertilising ingredients contained in the decaying mass of vegetation in a readily available form. The resulting humus is of the greatest value, not only as a source of plant food, but in improving the soil's texture, in preventing too rapid evaporation, and in enabling the soil to absorb and retain the water, thus rendering it less liable to suffer during dry spells.

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