

On the Land

GENERAL.

The Masterton Co-operative Dairy Company made a profit on its year's operations of £1507 7s 5d.

Meat prices at Smithfield are the highest for 25 years. Australian meat prices are the highest for 50 years.

There are some curious old customs still holding out in remote districts of England (says the *Australasian*). At Beeford, in Yorkshire, a grass field of 11 acres, belonging to the church, is let by bidding. A pin is stuck into a candle, and the highest bid at the time the pin falls takes the field for the year. This year bidding started at £19, and the rector's warden secured the field for £21. The rent goes towards the repair of the church.

The weather still continues mild and springlike, with occasional showers at night (says the *Fairlie* correspondent of the *Timaru Post*). An unusual feature this winter is the absence of snow on the high country after these showers. Feed in the district is getting scarce, and truck loads of mangolds and turnips are now beginning to make their appearance from the south. The farmers are able to get some of the sheep to the works, and some of the trains leaving Fairlie lately have had big loads.

Farmers in the Kapua district have pretty well completed their wheat sowing for the year (says the *Oamaru Mail*). Some delay occurred on account of the hard state of the ground, through the continued dry weather, but no other hindrance to speak of was experienced. The area under wheat this year is considerably in excess of that of last year, and what has struck is looking splendid. A fair amount of land is now undergoing preparation for oats. Grass feed in the locality is very scarce, but the root crops have kept the stock in very fair condition.

Able-bodied men in need of work can obtain it in the country, according to a statement made by the provincial secretary of the Farmers' Union on returning to Auckland from a rural tour (states the *Auckland Star*). 'Labor,' he said, 'is required in the country, and there is no doubt in my mind that when planting and milking commence there will be a shortage of farm workers. In fact, it is proposed to set up vigilance committees for dealing with this problem, as well as assisting in the matter of national registration for military service.'

There were average entries in all departments at Burnside last week. Fat Cattle, 172 yarded. The yarding included a few well-finished bullocks, and cattle were selling at from 15s to 20s per head above previous week's rates. Quotations: Prime bullocks, £14 15s to £16; extra prime, to £19 12s 6d; medium to good, £13 10s to £14 10s; light and unfinished, £9 10s to £11 5s; prime cows and heifers, £11 to £12 15s; extra prime, to £14 5s; medium to good, £8 10s to £10. Fat Sheep, 2739 yarded. The yarding consisted of a fair number of good wethers and several pens of heavy-weight ewes. The sale opened about 1s to 2s per head below previous week's extreme prices, and values continued firm throughout, graziers taking several lots of light wethers. Quotations: Prime heavy wethers, 27s to 30s; extra heavy, to 40s 9d; medium to good, 23s 6d to 25s 6d; light, 21s to 22s 6d; prime heavy ewes, 27s to 28s 6d; extra heavy, to 36s 6d; medium to good, 22s to 25s 6d; light and aged, 15s to 18s. Lambs, 1277 yarded. Freezing buyers were operating freely and a good sale resulted, lambs selling at 1s to 1s 6d per head better than previous week. Quotations: Prime heavy lambs, 22s to 24s 6d; extra prime, to 33s 9d; medium to good, 19s to 21s 6d; light and unfinished, 14s to 17s 6d. There was a fair supply of pigs, and prices were about on a par with previous week's rates.

At Addington last week the yarding of stock was again on a moderate scale, and there was a good attendance. Fat cattle were firmer, and there was a sharp rise in fat lambs and fat sheep. From an exporter's point of view it was the dearest market since the frozen

meat trade started. Fat Lambs.—Prime lambs, 22s 6d to 27s 6d; medium lambs, 19s to 22s; lighter, 12s to 18s 6d; extra prime lambs, to 23s 3d. Fat Sheep.—Extra prime wethers, to 37s 3d; prime wethers, 24s to 31s 9d; others, 20s to 23s 6d; merino wethers, 20s to 29s 7d; extra prime ewes, to 37s 6d; prime ewes, 22s 6d to 30s; medium ewes, 18s 6d to 22s; inferior ewes, 13s 2d to 18s. Fat Cattle.—Extra steers, to £27 15s; ordinary steers, £9 to £12 10s; extra heifers, to £12 15s; ordinary heifers, £6 to £9 5s; extra cows, to £15 10s; ordinary cows, £5 17s 6d to £9 10s—price of beef per 100lb, 30s to 44s; extra, to 46s. Pigs.—Exceptionally good baconers, to £5 6s 6d; heavy baconers, 70s to 76s; light baconers, 55s to 65s—price per lb, 6d to 6½d. Heavy porkers, 42s to 48s; light porkers, 36s to 40s—price per lb, 6d to 6½d. Medium stores, 25s to 30s; small stores, 18s to 24s; weaners, 6s (for small), to 14s (for extra good).

USE OF COMMON SALT AS A FERTILISER.

Some plants more than others are benefited by dressings of salt applied to the soil. Thus mangold wurzel and beetroot still preserve the ancestral love of salt acquired from their ancestors which grew on the seashore. It has been calculated that a crop of mangolds removes as much as 90lb of common salt from the soil.

In garden practice it has been found that the general effect of the addition of common salt is to stimulate leaf-tissue. Light applications of salt to a kitchen garden makes the leaves of lettuces, cabbages, and garden plants generally thicker and more succulent.

In agriculture salt is often used as a manure. It starts chemical changes which set plant food free, and it attracts moisture. But its use requires care. When strong, it poisons plants, and it is often used on gardening paths for killing weeds. Even when employed as a fertiliser it often acts as a check on vegetation at first. It has been remarked that the general effect of salt on kitchen garden vegetables is to increase the thickness and size of the leaves, and it has been proposed to use it systematically in the case of those vegetables, such as cabbages, where the leaves are eaten.

FIELD EXPERIMENTS.

An interesting little pamphlet, containing a report on field experiments in the County of Somerset, has been written by Mr. J. H. Burton, M.Sc., County Secretary for Agriculture attached to the Agricultural Instruction Committee of Somerset County Council.

As regards seeds hay, it is shown that artificial dressings have given a very paying return when applied to seeds hay. With reference to mangolds, the experiments demonstrate that 3cwt per acre of salt added to a complete mixture of artificials distinctly increases the estimated profit per acre. In former experiments carried out in this county over a series of years, it was found that the best dressing for mangold given in addition to one of dung was 2cwt nitrate of soda, 3cwt superphosphate, and 3.5cwt of salt. At the present time no better mixture can be suggested, though ¾cwt sulphate of ammonia might be substituted for 1cwt nitrate of soda. This must depend on the relative prices of the two manures.

Touching the best treatment for swedes, as regards practical recommendations, and keeping in view the two objects of growing a good crop of swedes and leaving something in the ground for future crops, the dressing, which on the past season's experience can perhaps be recommended with greatest confidence, is 3cwt superphosphate and 2 cwt fine bone-meal. Such a mixture shows approximately a composition of 1 per cent. ammonia, 20 per cent. soluble phosphate, and 10 per cent. insoluble phosphate.

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