

On the Land

GENERAL.

The average yield of wheat in Great Britain and Ireland is 32.8 bushels per acre for the ten years ending in 1913. For Germany the average yield is 30.7 bushels per acre for the same period; France, 20.1 bushels; Austria, 19.9 bushels. For 1911 the average wheat production per acre in Belgium was 39 bushels, and 38 bushels the next year.

Food economy was the subject of a lecture by Professor Halliburton, at a recent meeting of the London Institute of Hygiene. The lecturer corrected many mistakes that have been made by faddists. He explained that bacon was the cheapest food of all, even at the exorbitant prices at present ruling in England. However much the bacon bill went up, he advised the housekeeper to prefer it to beef or mutton, because a pound of it was all food of some kind, whereas a pound of beef, pleasant enough to eat, was, after all, mostly water. So he praised the pig as giving better human food than any other animal. He said that the pig was the easiest kind of flesh food to produce, because it was the most easy to feed, and one of the most prolific. It was a cheap, necessary, and economic animal.

A return has just been compiled by the North Auckland Farmers' Co-operative, Ltd., showing the comparative values of stock in the north during the last few years. In 1908 the average price for cattle was £3 6s 3d for the five months, July to November inclusive; in 1914 the average price was £5 16s 11d for the same period; in 1915 the average was £6 14s 6d. As illustrating the effect of the war, an average has been struck for September, 1913, and September, 1915, and this shows that in the 1913 period the average price for cattle was £4 16s 5d, while in the 1915 period it was £5 12s 3d. The price of sheep has also increased in a marked degree. In 1908 the average price of sheep was 13s 5d; in 1914 it was 16s 11d, and in 1915 £1 4s 6d.

At Addington last week the entries in stock were somewhat larger than at previous sale. There was a good attendance. Fat cattle declined about 3s per 100lb. Fat lambs sold at previous week's rates. Store sheep were rather easier. Fat sheep declined about 1s per head. Fat Lambs.—3171 yarded. Prime lambs, 20s to 22s 6d; medium, 15s to 19s 6d; lighter, 12s to 14s 6d. The principal sales were in fat sheep—prime wethers, 22s to 28s 3d; others, 15s to 21s 6d; extra prime ewes, to 28s; prime ewes, 21s 6d to 26s; medium ewes, 16s 6d to 21s; lighter, 13s to 16s; hoggets, 17s 6d to 19s 8d. Fat Cattle.—Extra prime steers, to £19; ordinary steers, £7 17s 6d to £12; extra prime heifers, to £10 17s 6d; ordinary heifers, £5 15s to £8; extra prime cows, £13; ordinary cows, £5 10s to £9. Price of beef per 100lb, 30s to 47s; extra, to 52s. Pigs.—Choppers, 50s to 92s; extra heavy baconers, to 92s; heavy baconers, 70s to 80s; light baconers, 55s to 67s 6d—price per lb, 6d; heavy porkers, 38s to 45s; light porkers, 33s to 36s—price per lb—light 6d, heavy 5d; medium stores, 22s to 31s; smaller, 16s to 21s; weaners, 2s to 8s.

There were fair entries at Burnside last week, and prices for fat cattle and sheep were about the same as those ruling at the previous sale. Fat Cattle.—162 head were yarded. Bidding was a little slack at the commencement of the sale, but later on prices improved, particularly for good quality cattle. Quotations: Prime bullocks, £16 to £19 5s; medium, £12 10s to £14 10s; inferior, £10 10s to £12; prime heifers and cows, £12 10s to £14 10s; extra, to £18; medium, £10 to £11 10s; inferior, £8 to £9. Fat Sheep.—1914 were penned, consisting chiefly of medium to good wethers and ewes with a few pens of extra good sheep. Quotations: Prime wethers, 22s to 28s; extra, to 35s; medium, 19s 6d to 21s 6d; inferior, 16s to 19s 6d; prime ewes, 22s to 24s 6d; extra, to 36s; medium, 19s

6d to 21s 6d; inferior, 14s to 15s 6d. Fat Lambs.—782 were penned, consisting of fair quality lambs. Competition was not so brisk as at previous sale, and prices showed a drop of 1s to 1s 6d per head. Quotations: Prime lambs, 19s to 22s 6d; medium, 15s to 16s 6d; inferior, 12s 6d to 14s 6d. There was an average entry of pigs for which prices were on a par with those of recent sales.

AN OLD RECIPE FOR WHITEWASH.

An old recipe for whitewash, said to be very good for outdoor exposure, is as follows:—Slake half a bushel of lime with boiling water, keeping it covered during the process. Strain it and add a peck of salt, dissolved in warm water; 3lb of ground rice put in boiling water and boiled to a thin paste; $\frac{1}{2}$ lb of powdered Spanish whiting, and 1lb of clear glue, dissolved in warm water; mix these well together, and let the mixture stand for several days. Keep the wash thus prepared in a kettle or portable furnace; and when used, put it on as hot as possible, with painters' or whitewash brushes. The washes which contain milk, flour, or glue are not to be advised for use in damp, interior places, owing to danger of decomposition of the organic matter.

SOIL AND FERTILITY GOING.

Professor Shaler points out that under savage life the undisturbed roots and stems of plants bound the soil to the rocks, and the average washing away in four or five centuries would not equal the inch that may be carried to the sea from a modern ploughed field by a single rainstorm. To this latter-day waste must be added cropping that takes away soluble minerals faster than they are formed. The soil is thus being reduced both in quantity and quality, and the results are to be seen in the lessened productiveness of lands in Italy, Greece, Spain, and most other parts of the world. The remedy to be sought is some means of preventing the loss of the soil at a greater rate than the decay of the rocks restores it, and the rational way of doing so with permanent effect is the application of farmyard manure, the ploughing under occasionally of green crops and the judicious employment of commercial fertilisers. Nearly half of the dry matter in vegetation consists of the element carbon, and all of it is derived from the carbonic acid gas contained in the atmosphere.

ACCUMULATION OF FERTILITY IN GRASS LAND CAUSED BY BASIC SLAG.

The improvement in the character of poor grass land, brought about by application of basic slag, is now so well known that it need not be insisted on, but it may be pointed out that the indirect value of such improvement in increasing the fertility of the land may now become an important factor, in view of the fact that considerable areas of such land may again come under the plough. This advantage formed the subject of Professor Somerville's paper, read at the meeting of the British Association. In some trials made at Cockle Park, the 'slagged' soil which has been longest under treatment produced—as compared with 'unslagged' soil—about 140 per cent. more oats 30 per cent. more mustard (first crop), 70 per cent. more mustard (second crop), and about 40 per cent. more wheat, the average increase from this station being 62 per cent. Another set of soils showed an aggregate increase of 57 per cent.; other two gave increases of 12 and 8 per cent. respectively, while the fifth did not respond consistently after the oat crop, which, however, was increased by 20 per cent. Adding together all the four crops, and taking the average for the five soils, it was found that the increase was 25 per cent. It is therefore evident that the factors of production have been materially increased as a consequence of using basic slag on grass land.

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