

On the Land

GENERAL.

A farmer in the Ashburton County who had about 32 acres down in oats, and who (says the *Guardian*) was hoping to get a good return of chaff, was very disappointed to find that it only turned out 17 tons.

A crop of 13 acres of solid straw Tuscan wheat recently thrashed in the estate of the late Mr. Robert Waugh, at Tinwald, returned the substantial yield of 62 bushels per acre (says the *Ashburton Guardian*). This is probably a record for the Ashburton County this season.

That land values along the coast have been soaring up steadily has (says a Wanganui correspondent of the *Dominion*) been demonstrated by the auction sale of Messrs. A. E. and A. Symes's estate in the Waverley district. The sale was one of the most important held for many years. The main offerings varied in price from £20 to £55 per acre, the total disposals under the hammer approximating £78,000.

Particulars in respect of the first block of land to be offered for selection in Hawke's Bay to discharged soldiers have been received by the District Lands and Survey Department, Napier (says the *Herald*). The land is in the Otawhao block, situated between Takapau and Ormondville townships. The block comprises 24 holdings, subdivided into areas of about 100 acres, of a total area to be opened of 2696 acres. The land is described as first-class dairy land, and possession will be given as from June 1.

Prices for all classes were firm at Burnside last week. Fat Cattle.—160 head were yarded, the quality being good. As this number was hardly up to butchers' requirements, prices advanced from 10s to 15s per head on previous week's rates. Extra prime bullocks brought up to £19 5s; prime, £16 to £17 10s; medium, £13 10s to £14 15s; light and inferior, £9 10s to £12; extra prime heifers to £16 5s; prime, £12 to £13 15s; medium, £10 10s to £11 17s 6d. Fat Sheep.—2714 were yarded, the greater proportion of which were medium quality ewes and wethers. Freezing buyers were operating, and kept prices firm throughout the sale, at rates fully equal to previous week. Extra prime wethers brought up to 34s; prime, 27s to 29s; medium, 23s to 26s; light and inferior, 19s to 21s 6d; extra prime ewes, to 30s 9d; prime ewes, 24s 6d to 28s; medium, 20s to 22s 6d. Lambs.—A medium yarding, 1312 coming forward. For all lambs suitable for freezing there was keen demand, at prices fully equal to late rates, and a complete clearance was made. Extra prime lambs brought up to 26s; prime, 21s to 22s 6d; medium, 18s 6d to 20s; light and inferior, 14s 6d to 16s 9d. There was an average entry of pigs, and prices were on a par with those ruling at previous sales.

At Addington last week there were fairly large entries of stock, especially store sheep. The attendance was good. The rain had the effect of firming the store sheep market, and all classes sold well. Fat cattle sold at about equal to late rates, fat lambs were rather firmer; fat sheep averaged previous week's rates; store cattle were duller of sale; and pigs were easier. Fat Lambs.—3620 yarded. Extra prime, to 27s 6d; prime, 21s to 24s 3d; lighter, 16s 8d to 20s 6d. Fat Sheep.—Prime wethers, 25s to 30s; others, 16s 9d to 24s 6d; prime ewes, 24s to 25s; medium, 19s to 23s 6d; others, 14s 10d to 18s 6d. Fat Cattle.—Extra prime steers, to £19 2s 6d; ordinary, £9 17s 6d to £12; extra prime heifers, to £12 17s 6d; ordinary, £7 to £9 10s; extra prime cows, to £13 5s; ordinary, £6 17s 6d to £10—price of beef per 100lb, 32s to 50s, and extra, to 55s. Pigs.—Choppers, 50s to 107s; extra heavy baconers, 100s to 105s; heavy baconers, 75s to 90s; light, 58s to 70s—price per lb, 6½d to 6¾d; heavy porkers, 44s to 48s; light, 38s to 42s—price per lb, 7d; large stores, 40s to 48s; medium, 28s to 38s; smaller, 18s to 27s; weaners, 3s 6d to 12s.

SEED WHEAT.

A good plump grain naturally grows a much stronger plant than a grain that has not matured properly. The occurrence of dwarf plants in a crop is often attributable to seed among which were grains that were shrivelled or ill-developed, the parent plant having been either diseased or lacking in virility. Broken and cracked seed, too, will sometimes germinate, but in the very nature of things produce but indifferent growth.

The seedling plant has to subsist on the plant food in the seed until it is large enough to draw its own requirements from the soil and the air. Obviously, if the store of that plant food is limited, the plant cannot be so robust as another that is well nourished as a seedling, and in the competition for moisture and plant food that must take place as growth proceeds, the delicate plant will inevitably suffer. It is very doubtful if a stunted plant ever overtakes one that has had a good start.

RUMINANTS AND NON-RUMINANTS.

Farm animals are divided into ruminants and non-ruminants. In the first class we have cattle, sheep, and goats, and in the second horses, and their kind, and pigs. These two classes are nourished by the same constituents, but the difference of construction of their digestive organs requires some difference in the form of the food. The ruminants are those animals that chew the cud. Their stomach is divided, and the first chamber (the paunch) is very capacious. The act of chewing the cud cannot be performed properly unless the paunch is fairly well filled. The animal requires only a certain amount of nutriment for the development of its energies. If the paunch were filled with rich food it would contain too much nutriment, and the excess nutriment would be wasted, to say nothing of the risk of injuring the animal's health. Practical farmers find by experience that a ruminant animal requires a large quantity of food, but that the food should contain a proportion of rather poor feeding stuff, containing a good deal of fibre. The really rich feeding constitutes only a small proportion of the total diet of ruminants.

On the other hand, the non-ruminants have a simple stomach, and this is quite small compared with the ruminant stomach. A horse doing heavy work requires more nutriment than a bullock merely living; and, further, the horse's stomach should not be too full at work; otherwise it would press on the lungs. These considerations make it plain that the food of the horse at all times should contain more nutriment, bulk for bulk, than the food of a bullock, and that this difference must be most pronounced at times of heavy work. Thus we see the reason why straw, a poor food, may be used largely for cattle-feeding, but sparingly for horse-feeding, and not at all for horses doing fast work that calls for great activity of heart and lungs. These considerations apply in corresponding degree to sheep and pigs. As a matter of fact, the pig has the least stomach capacity of all, in proportion to size, and cannot thrive on poor rations containing much fibre.

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