

On the Land

GENERAL.

Lambing is progressing slowly in North Otago (says the *Oamaru Mail*). While the lambs are strong, the majority are singles, and it does not appear as though a lambing record would be established this season.

Deep ploughing, subsoiling, and under-draining are excellent precautions against drought. Subsoiling is of no advantage unless assisted by good drainage, and deep tillage not only carries off the surplus water during wet spells, but supplies moisture during periods of drought by capillary attraction of the soil, as well as allowing the roots of plants to penetrate deeper.

Burnside Stock Report:—Fat Cattle—170 yarded. There was not a large yarding last week, but the offering included several pens of very prime bullocks, and taking the sale all over, prices were quite equal to previous week's rates. Quotations: Extra prime bullocks, to £22 17s 6d; best bullocks, £17 10s to £19 10s; medium, £15 to £16 10s; light, £12 10s to £14; extra prime heifers, £16 to £19 2s 6d; prime heifers, £13 to £15; light and unfinished, £9 to £10 10s. Fat Sheep.—2864 yarded. The bulk of the yarding consisted of medium-weight sheep, with the exception of several pens of prime heavy ewes and wethers, and on the whole prices were up to previous week's level. Extra heavy wethers, up to £2 10s 6d; best wethers, 35s to 38s; medium to good, 30s to 33s 6d; light and unfinished, 27s to 29s; extra heavy ewes, to 38s 9d; best ewes, 30s to 33s; others, 25s to 28s. Fat Lambs.—Thirty-two were forward and sold up to 30s 6d.

At the Addington market last week the yardings of stock totalled about the same as previous week. Store sheep, which were mostly wethers, sold well, but fat cattle showed a slight decline. Fat lambs were easier, on account of a much increased entry. Fat sheep were irregular, and on the whole prices were somewhat lower. Fat pigs were somewhat easier, in consequence of a larger supply. There was a rise in the price for store cattle. New season's fat lambs: Best lambs, 25s to 30s; lighter, 19s to 24s 6d. Fat Sheep.—Extra prime wethers, to 44s 6d; prime wethers, 31s to 41s; others, 26s 10d to 30s; shorn wethers, 20s 9d to 26s 6d; extra prime merino wethers, 29s 1d to 37s 6d; prime merino wethers, 24s 2d to 27s 6d; extra prime ewes, to 56s; prime ewes, 31s to 36s 1d; others, 26s to 28s 6d; shorn ewes, 19s 6d to 28s; extra prime hoggets, 41s 6d to 46s; others, to 32s 6d; shorn hoggets, 24s 3d. Fat Cattle.—Prime steers, £15 to £21 5s; ordinary steers, £9 5s to £14 10s; extra prime heifers, to £16 10s; prime heifers, £12 to £14 10s; ordinary heifers, £8 7s 6d to £11 10s; extra prime cows, £16 5s; prime cows, £10 to £14; ordinary cows, £7 5s to £9 10s. Pigs.—Choppers, £4 10s to £7 7s 6d; light baconers, £3 12s to £4; medium baconers, £4 5s to £4 12s 6d; extra heavy baconers, £5 to £5 8s—price per lb, 7½d to 7½d; light porkers, 44s to 48s; heavy porkers, 50s to 57s—price per lb, 8½d to 8½d; large stores, 50s to 53s; medium stores, 40s to 49s; smaller, 27s to 37s; weaners, 17s to 26s.

FEEDING DAIRY COWS.

The custom of feeding all the cows in a herd alike, irrespective of the yield of milk, is a source of considerable loss (says the *Journal* of the Department of Agriculture, Ireland). The capacity of every individual cow for the production of milk is limited. The liberal use of concentrated foods may increase the yield of milk to a certain extent, but it will not convert a bad milker into a good one.

On the other hand, it will generally pay to give a good milker a reasonable amount of cake and meal. Moreover, unless such an animal is well fed she will 'milk herself away.' It therefore follows that the quantity of cake or meal should be regulated by the

yield of milk, the heavy milkers getting an extra supply.

Another—and perhaps the most important—factor that should determine the quantity of cake or meal fed is the price realised for the produce. In the case of town dairies where the milk is sold at retail prices and the cows are fattened at the same time, it is not only necessary but it is profitable to feed well. On the other hand, where butter is made and the butter-milk consumed on the farm, or where the milk is sent to a creamery, the feed will require to be on a much more economical scale.

In the spring, while keeping up the supply of bulky foods, it may be advisable to reduce the concentrated foods to such cows as show an appreciable shrinkage in their milk yields.

Where there is not a sufficient supply of roots to carry the cows over till the grass season, catch crops should be grown for the purpose of providing the necessary green food. When the grass becomes plentiful hand feeding may be wholly or partly discontinued unless where there is a tendency to scour, when undecorticated cotton cake, or a mixture of equal parts of this cake and dried grains, may be fed at the rate of 2lb per head per day.

If the cows are allowed a rest of about two months they will put on flesh if grazed on fairly good pasture, and will be in much better condition to start the following season than cows that calve in the spring and are fed on hay, or roots and straw, even when allowed a much longer period of rest.

The question as to whether it pays to give cake or meal to spring calvers when the grass depends largely on the quality of the pasture, the price realised for the milk, and the yield of each cow. On first-rate pastures there will, as a rule, be no necessity to provide hand feeding. Where the pasture is of fair average quality, and the milk is sold at creamery prices, it is doubtful if it is profitable to feed cake or meal indiscriminately to all cows in the herd; at the same time it will probably pay in such a case to give a daily allowance of 2 or 3½ of concentrated foods to the heavy milkers.

Where cows are grazed on inferior pasture much better financial returns could often be obtained from the application of basic slag or superphosphate to the land than by the feeding of concentrated food to the cows in summer and autumn. The use of suitable artificial manures greatly improves poor pastures both as regards the quantity and quality of the herbage, with the result that the flow of milk is increased.

OLD SOWS.

How long should a sow be kept for breeding purposes (asks a writer in *Farm Field and Fireside*)? There is no fixed rule in the matter, and the right plan is to quit as soon as the particular animal begins to go downhill. When a sow has been an excellent breeder and nurse in the past there is a tendency to keep her on hand rather too long, forgetting that so far as profit-making is concerned sentiment should not be allowed to be mixed up with business. An old sow, so long as she has not been kept on hand too long, can now be sold for stock purposes at a price that pays better than would be obtainable were the animal first fattened up for the butcher. Sell the animal when pregnant, if it can be managed, it being advisable that at the time of sale she is so far forward that it can be seen conclusively that she is in pig. Should, however, she fail to breed, get her into fresh condition before marketing. Of course an old sow can be fattened, if desired, and she can be fattened both quickly and with comparative cheapness. She is more quickly off the hands without fattening, however, and the food necessary to fatten now costs money. Whenever quitted, however, have a young sow ready to take her place, because pigs will be pigs for some time yet. At the present time the old sow may be profitable after she begins to go down-hill, but there is still more profit to quit at the proper time and have a more vigorous animal in her place.

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