

## On the Land

### GENERAL.

Owing to the continued dry weather feed for stock is scarce, and gardens and orchards throughout the district are suffering for want of moisture (says the *Manawatu Herald*). Nearly every household in the borough is on short water allowance.

Potato crops in general this year are somewhat deceptive, but some very fine crops are to be seen in the neighborhood of Kakanui (says the *Oamaru Mail*). The grub, strangely enough, has not made its appearance underground, but where tubers are exposed to the air it makes its appearance in a few days.

While the long spell of dry weather has affected the pastures in the Manawatu to a serious extent, it is singular that up on the hills in Kiwitea, an adjoining county at the back of Feilding, farmers are having a splendid season. It is a feature of the hill country that a light rainfall is more beneficial than a heavy one. This season there has not been an excess of rain, and the rape crops and grass are producing stock in the very pink of condition. As a contrast, however, the flat country nearer Feilding, like the Manawatu, is feeling the dry spell very much.

Figures showing the enormous development of the fruitgrowing industry were given by the Hon. W. D. S. MacDonald at the Nurserymen's Conference, held at Wellington last week (says the *Otago Daily Times*). The annual increase in the acreage planted since 1911 had been as follows:—1911, 2120 acres; 1912, 2361 acres; 1913, 2525 acres; 1914, 3302 acres; 1915, 3588 acres; 1916, 2390 acres. In six years there had been an increase of over 16,000 acres of true commercial orchards. Since 1908—that was, since the great forward movement began—19,500 acres had been planted in modern, up-to-date orchards. Since the registration of orchards was provided for, 100,000 orchards, large and small, had been registered. The orchard tax, collected from commercial growers only, had so far produced £1700.

At Burnside last week 199 head of fat cattle were yarded, a large proportion of which was cow and heifer beef, the balance being made up of bullocks of very nice quality. Freezing buyers were operating very sparingly, and as the quantity yarded was more than butchers required, prices receded compared to previous week's rates by 10s to 15s per head. Quotations: Best bullocks £17 10s to £18 15s; extra to £20; medium to good, £15 to £16 15s; light do, £12 10s to £14 10s; best cows and heifers, £13 10s to £16; extra, to £18; medium to good, £11 10s to £13; light, £9 10s to £10 10s. Fat Sheep—2110 penned. The quality on the whole was good, and competition was very keen from exporters, consequently a good sale resulted at prices on a par with previous week's rates. Quotations: Best wethers, 36s to 38s 6d; extra, to 43s 3d; medium to good, 33s 6d to 35s; light, 27s to 30s; best ewes, 31s to 33s; extra, to 38s 3d; medium to good, 27s to 30s; light, 23s to 25s. Fat Lambs—1237 yarded. Prices for well-finished lots were on a par with previous week's rates, while unfinished lots were slightly easier. Quotations: Best lambs, 26s to 29s; extra, to 37s 6d; medium to good, 22s 6d to 24s; unfinished, 18s to 19s 6d. Pigs.—There was a good yarding of fats and a medium yarding of stores. Prices for heavy pigs were considerably easier, while lighter sorts sold well at late rates.

At the Addington market last week the yarding of fat cattle was smaller than that of the previous week, but there were larger offerings of fat lambs and fat sheep. Store sheep, of which the bulk were lambs, also found a large yarding, and there was a good entry of store cattle. Fat cattle opened easier, but recovered towards the end of the sale, and the same course characterised the fat lamb market, which was down 1s to 1s 6d per head at the commencement of the sale, but became better at the close. Fat sheep also opened a little easier, but firmed up to previous week's rates,

and in some cases even higher. Store sheep met with a good sale for forward sorts, and for the better classes of ewes, but backward and inferior descriptions were easier. Store cattle sold well. Fat Lambs—Best, 26s 6d to 30s 9d; medium, 22s 6d to 26s; light and unfinished, 17s 9d to 22s. Fat Sheep—Prime wethers, 33s 6d to 40s 6d; lighter wethers, 26s to 33s; merino wethers, 23s 5d to 25s; prime ewes, 32s to 38s 3d; medium ewes, 27s to 31s 6d; lighter ewes, 20s 9d to 26s 6d. Fat Cattle—Extra prime steers, to £22 10s; prime steers, £15 to £20 5s; ordinary steers, £10 10s to £14 15s; prime heifers, £11 to £14; ordinary heifers £6 15s to £10 10s; prime cows, £11 15s to £15 7s 6d; ordinary cows, £8 15s to £11 10s. Pigs—Choppers, £3 12s to £5 8s; extra heavy baconers, to £5 8s; heavy baconers, £4 16s to £5; lighter baconers, £3 15s to £4 10s, equal to 7½d per lb; heavy porkers, 57s to 60s; lighter porkers, 50s to 55s, equal to 9d per lb; large stores, 52s to 57s; medium, 42s to 50s; smaller, 28s to 38s; weaners, 19s to 24s; sows in pig, £3 12s to £5 7s.

### LUCERNE IN SOUTHLAND.

Lucerne is still so comparatively little known in Southland that the experience recounted below should be informative to many farmers (dairymen especially) in that great all-round agricultural section of the Dominion (says the *Journal of Agriculture*). In a letter to Mr. W. J. McCulloch, Fields Supervisor, Invercargill, Mr. J. D. Hopkins, of 'Holmwood,' Wyndham, writes:—

I sowed an acre of lucerne according to the Department's scheme on November 1, 1912, and herein give my experience of lucerne-growing in Southland, together with the benefits, in my opinion, of this fodder crop to the dairy-farmer.

The plot was divided into four sub-plots: (1) Control-plot—no lime and no inoculated soil; (2) lime only at the rate of 1500lb per acre; (3) lime 1500lb and inoculated soil 300lb per acre; (4) inoculated soil only at the rate of 300lb per acre.

The results have been such as indicate that inoculation is necessary on my land, for plots 1 and 2, which were not so treated, failed entirely and were eventually ploughed up. At first plot 3 appeared slightly better than plot 4, showing a difference apparently in favor of the addition of lime, but later on and at present no difference can be detected. My conclusion is that inoculation is essential, but that lime has little, if any, effect here.

The first cut of the remaining half-acre was made on 1st February, 1913, just three months from sowing, and this was left to act as a mulch. This first cutting tends to make the plant throw out a greater number of fresh shoots from the crown. The second cut was made in May of the same season, after which date the crop attained a further 12in in height, but this was left as a protection during winter. Each season since, four or five cuts have been taken off the half-acre—six spring-dray loads at each cutting. In 1913-14 one cutting was made into hay, the other cuttings being carted out to the cows and fed to them at night. So far I have not willingly attempted to graze the stand, but during last winter I had stock in the same field, and as the lucerne was not fenced they grazed the patch rather bare, with the result that I consider I have lost a cut this season.

From my short experience I am confident that lucerne can be successfully grown in Southland if properly treated, one of the chief points being to select land clean and free from weeds and give occasional intercultivation. To enable the latter operations to be carried out the seed should be sown in rows on the flat. I have at time of writing completed sowing a further 5 acres, all in rows, at the rate of 15lb per acre. For some years I have been growing oats, peas, vetches, and grass for green-soiling purposes, but I believe that lucerne will prove the best crop for my purpose. The cows eat it greedily and milk well on it. I may mention that the subsoil of my land is of a free open nature.

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