

On the Land

GENERAL.

From the 12th May to the 31st December of last year 315 letters from farmers were received at the Ruakura Farm of Instruction, asking for information in regard to lucerne.

There are 226 South Island farmers co-operating with the Department of Agriculture in the conduct of field experiments this season. Altogether 3739 experiments will be conducted on southern farms.

Splendid crops of red clover are to be seen throughout the pumice country this season—in the Lichfield, Putaruru, Okoroire, and Rotorua districts. Large well-saved stacks of the valuable red-clover hay are to be seen in many places.

The obvious fact that artificial manures are more effective when placed below the seed than when applied on the surface of the soil is being demonstrated at Ruakura Farm of Instruction at the present time in connection with several forage-crop experiments. The effect is most striking with a crop of peas and millet where the manure was applied by means of an ordinary grain-drill below the seed and at the same time, the growth (dense and vigorous) is excellent, being fully three times the weight of the crop grown where the manure was broadcasted on the surface and the seed afterwards drilled in. Not only this, but only half the manure was used where it was drilled in below the seed. In an experimental mangel crop the great advantage of drilling in the manure is also strikingly demonstrated.

At Addington last week there was a large entry of store sheep, and increased entries of fat sheep and lambs. The entries in the other departments were average. In store sheep there was an improvement in young ewes and rape lambs. Fat lambs sold at slightly improved rates in consequence of the demand on the part of graziers, who took the bulk of the offerings. Fat sheep were easier. Fat cattle made a recovery in prices, and fat pigs sold at rate rates. Store cattle were dull of sale. Best fat lambs made 16s to 17s 9d; a few extra, to 18s 4d; and lighter, 12s 1d to 15s 6d, the major portion of the yarding selling at 15s to 17s. The range of prices for fat sheep was: Prime wethers, 18s to 21s 6d; lighter, 16s to 17s 6d; merino wethers, 16s; prime ewes, 16s to 20s 3d; medium, 13s 6d to 15s 6d; aged and light, 10s 6d to 13s. Fat steers brought £7 17s 6d to £12 10s; heifers, £6 5s to £10 7s 9d; and cows, £5 17s 6d to £8; extra, to £12 2s 6d. Choppers realised 70s to 120s; heavy baconers, 60s to 70s; extra, to 74s; and lighter sorts, 50s to 57s 6d, these prices being equivalent to 5d to 5½d per lb. Heavy porkers brought 42s to 46s, and lighter sorts 35s to 40s, equal to 5½d per lb. A large number of store pigs came forward, and as a result of over supply prices all round were easier, although large sorts sold well.

At Burnside last week there were full yardings of fat cattle and fat sheep, but the entry of fat lambs was below the average. There was a decided fall in the prices of fat sheep and cattle, whilst lambs and pigs sold at late rates. There was a yarding of 183 fat cattle, consisting principally of cows and heifers, with an odd pen of good quality bullocks. At the commencement of the sale prices were much the same as previous week, but as the sale progressed prices receded, there being a drop of 15s to 20s per head for bullocks, and 10s to 15s per head for heifers and cows. Quotations: Best bullocks, £10 15s to £12; extra, to £13 7s 6d; medium, £9 10s to £10 5s; inferior, £7 10s to £8. Best cows and heifers, £8 10s to £9 5s. The 2051 fat sheep forward were too many for butchers' requirements. Freezing buyers were unable to operate owing to the works being blocked, any available space being reserved for lambs. As the sale progressed prices receded till at the end of the auction all classes of sheep were almost unsaleable. Quotations: Prime wethers, up to 23s 6d; extra, to 28s; medium, up to 21s 6d; light, 18s. Only 1046 fat lambs were offered, and prices were on a par with late

rates. Best lambs brought from 17s 6d to 19s, and medium from 14s to 16s 6d. The pigs forward totalled 118. Competition for stores was very keen, and fats sold at late rates. Quotations: Suckers to 20s, slips to 24s, stores to 30s, porkers to 45s, baconers to 70s.

FORAGE FOR DAIRY COWS.

A question which often proves perplexing to the dairy-farmer, and one which requires serious consideration, is how to provide a supply of early spring forage for in-calving cows. The subject (says Mr. T. W. Lonsdale in the *Journal of Agriculture*) is of vital importance, as each spring numbers of cows drop their calves before the ordinary pastures are producing more than sufficient to maintain life. At such times the value of artificial feeding is inestimable. Numerous crops are well adapted for supplying the dairyman's requirements, and the virtues of several have already been expounded by the writer.

A plant which has not received the attention it merits for this purpose is chou moellier, though it has formed the subject of numerous favorable reports. As forage for dairy cows it probably excels.

An important experiment in this connection has been conducted at the Moumahaki Experimental Farm, the primary object of which was to test the value of various forage crops for fattening lambs for the early market. On the 29th March, 1912, several acres were sown with rape, Buda kale, thousand-headed kale, silver-beet, and chou moellier. The seed was sown on ridges 26in apart, and the plants were afterwards singled to, roughly, about 15in apart. The crop was horse-hoed late in the autumn and during the early spring, but very little cultivation could be given owing to continuous rains. With the exception of silver-beet (which was sown at the rate of 6lb of seed per acre) the other varieties of forage received 3lb seed per acre. The manure, 3½cwt per acre, was similar throughout, being basic superphosphate, 3cwt; sulphate of potash, ½cwt; and nitrate of soda, ¼cwt.

Chou moellier produced the heaviest crop, and on the 16th September, when stocking commenced, the approximate yield was 20 tons per acre. It was not so readily eaten as rape, though as cow-feed it certainly appeared pre-eminent.

Considering that chou moellier thrives during the winter, it is easily cultivated, transplants readily, and gives a wealth of feed during the early spring, it will amply repay the farmer to give it a trial next autumn.

PRODUCTION OF WOOL IN NEW ZEALAND.

In the course of his quarterly address to the Christchurch Chamber of Commerce last week, the president said: 'The wool sales have resulted in good prices, showing a considerably larger aggregate sum than that of the year 1911-12. In this connection the following figures, for which I am indebted to one of our merchants, and which are approximately correct, will be of interest.' Total number of bales exported from July 1, 1911, to June 30, 1912, 517,320. Estimated quantity sold to local mills, 20,000. Estimated production for the year ended June 30, 1912, say, 537,320; approximate value, say, £6,500,000. Estimated exports for year ending June 30, 1913, say, 510,000 bales. Estimated quantity sold to local mills, 20,000 bales. Estimated total production for the year ending June 30, 1913, say, 530,000 bales; approximate value, say, £7,500,000. Number of bales offered in New Zealand from July 1, 1911, to June 30, 1912, 238,869. Number of bales offered in New Zealand from July 1, 1912, to January 30, 1913, 221,736. Number of sales held up to January 31, 1913, 15. Number of sales to be held after January 31, 7. Total sales for this season, 22.

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