

On the Land

MARKET REPORTS.

271 head of fat cattle were yarded at Burnside last week, with a fair sprinkling of good quality cattle. The sale opened on a par with the previous week, and quality cattle firmed to the extent of 10s per head. There was a large number of plain cattle and cows throughout, for which prices showed little change. Extra prime bullocks made £18 7s 6d, prime £11 15s to £15, heifers £8 15s to £9 10s, extra prime cows to £10 7s 6d, cows from £5 to £7. Fat Sheep.—There were penned 1992, consisting of some specially good heavy wethers with the usual proportion of medium wethers and ewes. The sale opened firm on the preceding week's rates, but generally was very erratic, and eased very considerably at the close. The exporters took most of the freezing sheep, and were keener on ewes, quite a number of pens of wethers being neglected. Prices were easier as the sale progressed from 1s to 2s on late rates. Extra prime heavy wethers made up to 52s, prime 44s to 46s 6d, medium and lighter sorts to 43s 6d, extra prime heavy ewes to 39s 9d, prime 30s to 35s, medium and lighter 27s 6d to 29s 6d. Fat Lambs.—There was an entry of 605 lambs forward, with some specially good milk lambs in the pens. The sale was a keen one, and competition was good for well-finished lambs. There was the usual proportion of unfinished sorts also, and these went to graziers at prices accordingly. Extra prime lambs made to 55s 9d, prime lambs 39s 3d to 45s, medium 34s to 35s 6d, stores from 25s upwards. Pigs.—There were 140 fats and 98 stores. Both baconers and porkers sold at somewhat higher rates than was the case the previous week.

The accommodation last week at Addington was taxed to the utmost, there being about 40,000 sheep forward in the store section, of which half were from outside centres. A good market prevailed throughout. Fat Lambs.—There was a heavier entry, 4300 being penned. There was a keen sale at 12½d for prime under 42's, 12¼d for light-weights, and 11¾d for over-weights. Extra prime lambs made 47s 6d to 49s 7d, prime 41s to 44s 6d, medium 38s to 40s 6d, light 35s to 37s 6d, store 32s to 34s 6d. Fat Sheep.—There was a larger entry and an easier sale by 1s 6d a head, exporters being enabled to compete for both wethers and ewes. Extra prime wethers made 49s 7d, prime 42s 6d to 46s, medium 38s 6d to 42s, light 34s to 38s 6d, extra prime ewes 42s 3d, prime 37s 6d to 40s, medium 34s to 37s, light 30s to 33s, old 26s to 29s. Vealers.—An improved market. Runners made to £7, good vealers £3 12s 6d to £5 15s, good calves £2 5s to £3 10s, small calves £1 to £2. Fat Pigs.—A shade better market. Choppers made 50s to £4, baconers £3 15s to £4 2s 6d, heavy baconers £4 5s to £4 15s, average price per lb 6d to 7d; porkers 50s to 55s, heavy porkers 57s to 67s; average price per lb 7d to 8d.

COMPETITION OF COLONIAL FRUIT.

I happened to be in Birmingham one day when the Imperial Fruit Show was on, and the Bingley Hall, which we usually associate with live stock, was given over mostly to apples (says a writer in *Farm, Field, and Fireside*, London). What struck me most about it all was the wonderful display of apples from overseas, bright in color, perfect in skin, uniform in size, and perfectly packed. You saw them in competition, on the stands of the wholesale fruit merchants and the stand of the Canadian Government.

Why did the growers' organisations in Canada send their apples to Birmingham to compete with British fruit, and why did the Government of that Dominion go to the trouble and expense of being represented there? You know the answer. It was all business, a means of advertising the apples you could see in every fruit shop in Birmingham.

Don't let us make any mistake about this Colonial enterprise, which is not confined to fruit. It is business and the industry of a State, backed up and supported by its governing power. In a word, the Colonies are young and filled with the vigor of youth, while the ideas of the Mother Country are old, fixed, and conservative.

BASIC SLAG AND SOILS.

Farming experience has proved that basic slag can be used as a source of phosphates on all kinds of soil, but there are certain types of soil on which its effect is especially beneficial to the crops. Such soils are those of a peaty character, rich in organic matter, and stiff clay soil.

There is in slag a small quantity of free lime which helps to disintegrate the heavy soil, rendering it more friable and at the same time liberate a proportion of the natural stock of potash in such soils.

LESS FARMYARD MANURE: MORE FERTILISERS.

A good many years ago there were many farmers who prided themselves in sticking to farmyard manure, and who looked down with a certain amount of contempt on the chemical manures then coming into use (says a Home paper). The tide has turned; there are now some farmers who think that farmyard manure is not necessary, and that equally good results can be obtained more cheaply by the use of fertilisers.

Both classes of men have been proved to be wrong. The class of men in England who would not use chemical fertilisers is extinct; the class of men who think farmyard manure can be dispensed with have been more in evidence during the past few years. It is true that such a man cultivating soils that have been previously regularly dressed with farmyard manure can get good crops with artificial for a few years, but gradually the crops will fall off, because there is a fertilising value in the bulky organic manure which chemical fertilisers do not possess.

Among such advantages may be classed the

power of the manure to improve the mechanical condition of the soil, whether heavy or light; it also increases the supply of humus, conserves warmth and moisture, stimulates bacterial activity. There is also in farmyard manure some extra virtue, which scientists are at the present trying to discover, but so far without any definite success.

Many demonstrations at agricultural stations and experience on farms have, within the last ten years, proved conclusively that the best system is to combine the use of the two classes of manures, and it has been shown that on many soils the quantity of the bulky manure can be reduced to a considerable extent.

No longer is it considered essential to apply such big dressings as 15 to 20 tons per acre and also artificials; equally good results can be obtained with 10 to 12 tons and suitable artificials; but it behoves farmers to take care that the farmyard manure is of good quality, and has not lost half its virtue by bad treatment.

PLANTS AND ACID SOILS: SUITABLE CROPS.

The following is a list of common farm crops arranged according to their capability of withstanding acid conditions:—Rye, potatoes, oats, swedes, mangels, wheat, vetches, beans, peas, barley, and clover.

The first three or four will stand almost any degree of acidity usually found on cultivated soils, provided that other conditions—such as cultivation and manuring of the land, freedom of the crop from disease, such as finger-and-toe, are satisfactory. The last five or six crops on the list are very sensitive to sour conditions and furnish, every year, many examples of crop failures owing to want of lime. Such failures are more pronounced in a dry than in a wet season. The symptoms shown by the crops failing owing to want of lime are best seen while the plants are still in the "seedling" stage; corn when it is 3in or 4in high; roots about the time when they are ready for singling. A healthy barley plant has an extensive fibrous root system, the smallest rootlets being white in color. A barley plant, suffering from want of lime, first turns rather purplish in color, especially in the stem; the leaves then turn yellow and gradually die. It has a stunted root system, yellow or yellowish-brown in color, with practically no white fibrous roots. The main roots end abruptly and appear to be slightly thickened at the ends. The leaves of swedes or turnips on land short of lime, turn yellow at the edges, the yellow rim gradually becoming broader until the whole leaf turns yellow and dies. Want of lime is one of the commonest causes of the dying off of crops in the early stages. If the plants survive the seedling stage the crop is, as a rule, not seriously affected later by soil acidity. Even those at the beginning of the scale of crops given above will be affected during a dry time in early summer. It is not claimed that the list of crops given is absolutely accurate in every detail, but it is sufficiently correct to serve as a guide when choosing crops for acid soils.

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