

On the Land

MARKET REPORTS.

There was a medium yarding of fat cattle at Burnside last week, numbering 227 head. The bulk of the entry was composed of medium quality. There were practically no heavy bullocks forward, but some of the pens contained extra choice heifers and cows, and a fair proportion was plain in quality. The sale was a good one throughout, values being 15s to 20s on the average ahead of the previous week's rates. There was a slight easing towards the close, however, it being apparent that butchers had secured their requirements. Quotations:— Extra prime steers up to £18 17s 6d, prime £15 to £16 10s, medium £12 to £13 10s, extra prime cows and heifers up to £14 17s 6d, prime £10 10s to £12, medium £7 to £8 10s. Fat Sheep.— A fairly large yarding, numbering 2531, comprising principally medium weight ewes. The proportion of heavy sheep was small, and these sold at par to 1s appreciation on the average compared with preceding sales rates. Exporters' competition was not so strong as at the previous sale, and values for medium sorts were 1s to 1s 6d lower than those obtaining then. Quotations: Extra prime heavy wethers up to 55s 6d, prime 43s to 47s, medium 37s to 40s, light 30s to 33s, extra prime heavy ewes 38s, prime 31s to 34s, medium 25s to 27s 6d, light 12s to 17s. Fat Lambs.— An entry of 904, the bulk of which lacked finish. A few well-finished pens realised prices on a par with the preceding sale's rates. Quotations: Extra prime lambs 39s, prime 34s to 36s 6d, medium 30s to 32s, unfinished from 22s. Pigs.

There were 100 fats and 46 slips. Prices for the former rose somewhere in the vicinity of 10s, and the latter sold at late rates.

Entries at the metropolitan market at Addington last week were inclined to be on the light side as compared with the previous week's sale. Fat Lambs.—1140 were forward, as against 2000 on the preceding week. Many of indifferent quality were penned, and there was a decline of from 2s to 3s a head. Prime lambs made 37s, medium 31s 6d to 34s, light 28s to 31s, store 23s to 27s. Fat Sheep.— A few more than 11 full races were penned, some good drafts of ewes and wethers being included. Except for best quality lines prices were lower by 1s 6d to 2s 6d a head than on the previous week. Extra prime wethers made 50s 6d, prime 42s to 45s, medium 38s 6d to 41s, light 33s to 37s, extra prime ewes 42s 6d, prime 34s to 36s 9d, medium 30s 6d to 33s 6d, light 25s to 29s 9d, aged 20s to 24s 6d. Fat Cattle.—490 were forward, as against 650 on the previous week. The quality was particularly poor. Extra choice beef made up to 40s a 100lb, prime 35s to 37s, medium 32s to 34s, light 26s to 31s, rough from 16s to 24s, extra prime steers

£22 7s 6d, prime £13 17s 6d to £17 10s, medium £12 to £13 10s, light £8 5s to £11 15s, extra prime heifers £10 17s 6d to £12 7s 6d, prime £7 15s to £10 7s 6d, ordinary £5 to £7 5s, extra prime cows £11 12s 6d, prime £7 to £9 5s, medium £5 to £6 15s, light £4 to £4 15s, aged and inferior £3 10s, vealers and runners to £6, good vealers £4 to £5 5s, medium vealers £3 to £3 15s, good calves £2 to £2 15s, small 10s to 25s. Fat Pigs. Values were well maintained. Choppers made £3 10s to £8, light baconers £3 15s to £4 7s 6d, heavy £4 10s to £5 5s, extra heavy £5 13s (average price per lb 7d to 7½d), light porkers £2 4s to £2 14s, heavy £2 17s to £3 5s (average price per lb 6½d to 7½d).

HOUSE PLANTS IN WINTER.

One of the main sources of difficulty in growing plants indoors in the winter is that in the average home the temperature, with regard to the welfare of the plants, is neglected (says *Nature Magazine*, of Washington, D.C.). During the day the temperature is kept higher than the optimum for most plants. This results, if other conditions are favorable, in a large amount of tender, unhealthy growth. At night the temperature is allowed to go down to a point most unfavorable to plant growth. The tender parts developed during the forcing conditions of the day are most severely set back by the cold of the night. Extreme conditions are not only disastrous to plant strength, but also are favorable to the development of diseases and some insects.

When a plant does not seem to be doing well, turn it out of the pot and find what the trouble is; it may be a worm. Remove and mix a little sheep manure with the loam and place two or three small pieces of charcoal in bottom of pot to keep the contents sweet and healthy. Never place the loam in a pan in the oven, thinking you will kill whatever may be in it, because by doing so one kills the life of the soil.

THE UNCEASING DRAIN OF PHOSPHATES.

The phrase "no phosphate, no life," said to have been coined first by the great agricultural scientist, is rather hackneyed, but it expresses the great necessity of supplying phosphates to the soil for the development of all life, both animal and vegetable (says a Home paper).

When the unceasing drain of phosphates from all descriptions of cultivated soils, arable and grass, year after year and century after century, is taken into account, it is no matter of surprise that our fields and pastures should have become denuded of this constituent, and that unless the drain is made good the soil will fail to bring forth its in-

crease; and we are liable to think that arable land is more subject to loss than pasture land, an erroneous idea resulting in thousands of acres of impoverished pastures, which now has to be made good by outlay on manures.

It has been widely overlooked, probably because the deterioration of grass land is gradual, that the drain of phosphates principally, but also of potash, is continual. While manures of various kinds have been freely applied to arable land, pastures have been too often neglected, a fact which the country is only now waking up to, and scientists are urgently putting before farmers the necessity of giving manurial treatment to such fields, and demonstrates the profit to be derived from such practice.

Phosphate of lime is an important constituent in the bone construction of all animals, in the milk of cows, in the wool of sheep, and, in fact, of every part of animals; and only a small proportion is returned to the land in the animal excreta.

SPRING FERTILISERS.

The value of a fertiliser does not depend, especially when applied in spring, on its total percentage of nitrogen, phosphate of lime and potash, but upon the percentage of those constituents, that the growing crop can utilise. This is a point that farmers should keep in view when considering the purchase of fertilisers. A fertiliser which could be wisely applied in autumn might be unsuitable for spring application.

There are some substances that contain a high percentage of one or the other fertilising constituents, but the constituents are in a comparatively inert form; they afford little or no nourishment to the young crop; in fact, they may "analyse well" but are bad fertilisers; the plant may be starving for suitable nourishment, but gets, if not exactly a stone, something which it cannot use.

The effect of a dressing of farmyard manure lasts throughout the rotation, but with the modern system of intensive cultivation, fertilisers supplementing the bulky manure are applied to be utilised by the one crop generally, not with the object of permanently enriching the land.

Applications of nitrate of soda, sulphate of ammonia, superphosphate, concentrated potash salts, which are the fertilisers most largely used in spring, if not used up by the crop, will be subject either to total or partial waste before the next season comes round.

The object of the farmer is to turn over his expenditure on manures quickly by getting the outlay back with a profit by the bigger yield of the crop, and therefore the modern farmer uses in spring fertilisers that act on the first crop rather than those kinds which become available slowly.

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