

ON THE LAND

MARKET REPORTS.

At Burnside last week 274 head of fat cattle were yarded, consisting of several pens of good quality cattle. Prices, as compared with the previous week's sale, were from 10s to 15s per head lower. Quotations: Prime bullocks £10 to £11 10s, medium £7 5s to £8 10s, light and unfinished £6 to £6 10s, heifers and cows £4 10s to £6. Fat Sheep.—3750 were yarded, a fair proportion of which consisted of extra heavy wethers, the balance comprising good freezing wethers and ewes. The demand was not at all keen, and prices for heavy sheep were easier by 2s per head, while lighter sorts were 1s per head lower. Quotations: Extra prime wethers to 34s, prime wethers 28s to 30s 9d, medium 22s 6d to 24s 6d, light 17s to 19s 6d, extra prime ewes to 27s 9d, prime ewes 18s to 20s 6d, medium ewes 14s to 15s 6d, light and aged from 9s up. Fat Lambs.—1245 head were yarded, for which freezing buyers were operating at about the same price as the preceding week. Pigs.—A full yarding was offered, all classes being represented. The demand was somewhat slack, and prices showed a reduction of fully 10s per head as compared with the preceding week's rates. Best baconers realised from 6d to 6½d per lb and best porkers from 7½d to 7¾d per lb.

At Addington market last week yardings of all sections of stock were smaller. Fat Lambs sold a shade better, likewise prime fat sheep, but beef was unaltered, and store sheep scarcely sold as freely as on the previous week. Fat Lambs.—4963 were penned, about 500 less than last week. The bulk were unfinished. The sale opened at the preceding week's values, but firmed up near the finish, and averaged about 7¾d per lb. Extra prime lambs 25s to 30s, prime 21s 9d to 24s 6d, medium 19s 9d to 21s 6d, light and unfinished 16s 6d to 19s 6d. Fat Sheep.—A smaller yarding and a hardening tendency for heavy sheep, light ewes being slightly easier. Prime sheep were generally beyond exporters' limits. Extra prime wethers 27s 6d to 34s, prime 23s to 27s, medium 19s 9d to 22s 9d, light and inferior 17s to 19s 6d. Extra prime ewes 23s to 25s 9d, prime 19s to 22s 9d, medium 14s 9d to 18s 9d, lighter 12s to 14s 6d, old 9s 10d to 11s 9d. Fat Cattle.—A yarding of 450 compared with 508 on the previous week. A special line of 12 averaged over £17, but for average beef values were the same as on the preceding week. Extra prime steers £14 to £18 5s, prime £10 to £13 5s, medium £7 10s to £9 17s 6d, inferior £5 5s to £7 5s, prime heifers £5 5s to £7 15s, ordinary £3 to £5, prime cows £4 15s to £6 15s, ordinary £3 to £4 12s 6d. Vealers.—Anything good sold at 10s per head better than on the previous week. Runners to £5, good vealers £3 10s to £4 10s, medium £1 10s to £2 5s, small calves from 5s upwards. Fat Pigs.—The demand was only moderate. Choppers £3 to £4 10s, light baconers £3 to £3 10s, heavy £3 15s to £4 5s, extra heavy to £4 15s (average price per lb 6d), light porkers 40s to 45s, heavy 47s 6d to 51s (average price per lb 7½d to 8d).



THE CLAMPING OF SEED POTATOES.

Potatoes intended for early planting should not be left until the spring, as, however carefully these are stored, it will be found that they are sure to grow out, thus necessitating the rubbing off of long, elongated growth, the removal of which must necessarily weaken other growths which have to follow (says *Farm, Field, and Fireside*). Serious mistakes are made by storing early seed potatoes in boxes in too warm a temperature, or where extremes of cold and heat are apt to be experienced. A cool cellar or ground floor is to be preferred to a loft near the roof, as such positions are extremely cold in the winter and much too hot during the early days of spring. In order to secure heavy crops, short, sturdy sprouts are essential.

An ideal way of storing seed potatoes is to place them in the sprouting tray immediately the crop is lifted, as this does away with the labor of clamping and then unclamping in the spring. Early potatoes in particular are sure to sprout in the clamp, and the sprouts are not only broken off once, but several times during the period of storing, until by the time they are planted the tuber

has become excessively weak. The tubers must not be subjected to severe frost, and the boxes should, therefore, be covered with sacking.

When arranging the tiers of chitting trays, they should be so placed that as much light as possible can reach the tubers, otherwise the sprouts will become drawn up and weak. Special trays may be made at home out of old packing cases. The standard size is usually three feet long, one foot wide, and three inches deep. In each corner is nailed a square corner-piece, seven inches long, and to these is fixed at each end of the box a cross-piece to carry the handle-bar, which runs the whole length of the box, and must be strong enough to carry it by when full. The high ends enable light to pass in over the sides when the boxes are piled in tiers.

WINTER WASHING OF FRUIT TREES.

A matter which may at the present time advantageously occupy the attention of those farmers and small holders who have plantations or orchards of fruit trees is the cleansing of the trees with a view to controlling insect and fungus pests. Expert fruit growers know that the winter work in connection with fruit orchards comprises, first the thinning of overcrowded plantations by judicious pruning, then any necessary top-grafting, and after, the washing of the trees with a "winter wash," manuring being carried out some time during the winter as a part of the scheme.

With regard to the winter washing of fruit trees (says a Home paper), this operation removes moss and lichens and reduces the number of pests to which the trees are subject. The chief of them are the Woolly Aphis, Mussel Scale, Codlin Moth, and Blossom Weevil, all of which spend the winter on the trunks or branches of the tree, under loose scales of bark, or among the moss and lichen.

Three classes of wash are in fairly general use. They are the strongly caustic fluids, the chief ingredient of which is caustic soda, the lime sulphur washes, made by boiling lime and sulphur, and the lime washes. The last are the simplest form, and are made from lime and water alone. Their action is essentially that of a covering wash, that is to say, they leave a deposit or covering layer over the surface of the trunk and branches and so imprison insects or eggs. They have also a definite cleansing effect.

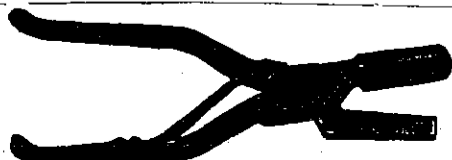
A great many growers are this season using this wash alone, and on account of its cheapness and general effectiveness it may be specially recommended. It is not, of course, so useful in bad cases of neglected trees as the first or second classes of wash, any of which, if thoroughly applied, will give the trees a cleaning which will last some time. The strong washes, indeed, should not be used every year, and when they are employed great care should be taken with them, as they will damage the hands and clothes and any vegetation of a more tender kind than the wood or bark of a tree.

The best time to apply the lime washes is the early spring just before the buds break, though they may be used later, almost until the bursting of the blossoms without ill effect, provided they are carefully applied. In fact, against insect pests, the later applications give the best results.

A good caustic wash is made from 2 to 2½lb of caustic soda and 10 gallons of water. The soda in powder form is simply dissolved in the water and the solution is ready for use. The wash should be sprayed upon the tree, every part of the trunk, branches, and twigs being covered. It is not advisable to allow livestock in grass orchards for a week or two after spraying.

The lime sulphur wash can be made from 1 gallon of lime sulphur being dissolved in 14 gallons of water. A concentrated solution is bought ready-made and water added to it. This wash should not be used in a copper machine.

A good lime wash is to be made from, say, 15lb of best quicklime added to 10 gallons of water. Care should be taken to see that the best fresh quicklime, of a purity of about 98 per cent., is used. Builders' quicklime often contains impurities, is partially air-slaked, and should be avoided. In making the wash, sufficient water should be poured on to cover the lime while it is slaked, and the remainder of the water should then be added, stirring vigorously. The resulting lime wash should be carefully strained before it is put into the spraying machine.



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