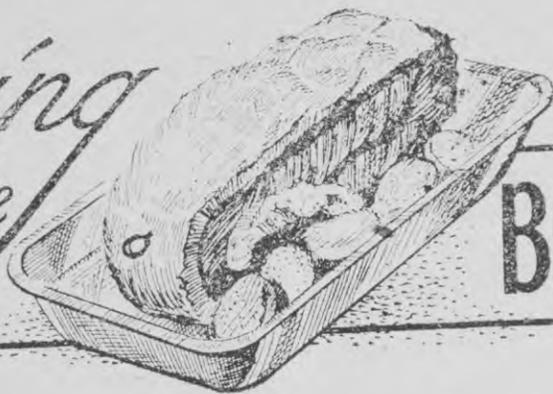


*Catering
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BEEF EATERS

DUE perhaps to the fact that sheep are the most conspicuous animals in the Dominion, New Zealanders have come to regard themselves as a mutton-eating race—a belief that was heightened during the recent "invasion" of beef-eating Americans. Actually, it is an incorrect impression, because a considerably greater weight of beef than mutton finds its way on to the New Zealander's dining table.

Strangely enough, in view of these circumstances, considerably less attention is paid to the beef producing animals than to sheep, and yet hill cattle on the farm have a value apart from their actual cash returns. They are a valuable implement for pasture control. At present there is a need for improving the animal so that a better beef carcass is produced while, at the same time, the general usefulness of the beast is preserved. Hand in hand with this problem of improving the quality of the beef animal goes the need for extending overseas markets—a problem, of course, that is not confined to beef export.

New Zealand practically holds the record for meat consumption, and is well ahead of other countries in the amount of butter it eats. As is usual with exporting countries, she consumes the maximum second-grade products while exporting the higher quality goods. The reasons for this are understandable. A product graded on the spot may and does compare favourably with the high-grade product which has been transported thousands of miles in cold store. Before the war New Zealand was on a quota. This quota was on a weight basis, and it is therefore obvious that to get the maximum exchange for her products she must obtain the highest value per pound for her meat.

What will happen in the future cannot be predicted. Will the world go back to the fallacy of over production in some countries while millions starve in others? Will New Zealand be on a quota in the post-war world?

The United Kingdom farmer, always the Dominion's greatest competitor, has obtained a recognition and encouragement during the war years which he had never had before. Now he is prosperous and has a market for more than he can produce—and a profitable market too. Looking towards the future, he is doing his best to prevent a return to the doldrums of the years between the two wars.

How far he will succeed is of great importance to New Zealand farmers, and it behoves them both to think of improving their products and of looking for other profitable markets for their exports.

New Zealand has never regarded herself as a high-class beef country. For years she has looked at the Argentine and suffered from an inferiority complex. In very truth, New Zealand's production of high-class beef has been low—a possible explanation for the high consumption of beef in the Dominion. What can be done to improve matters? Why is it that her quality beef has lagged so far behind her quality mutton, wool, and butter?

First of all, by specialisation in dairy products, New Zealand has produced an animal whose only reason for being born is to produce butter-fat. Like all living things, these dairy cows grow old. Some fall by the wayside through low butter-fat production, and thus come on the market as beef cattle. From this specialisation, they are angular, the