

GRADING, QUALITY, DRESSING, AND PACKING.

The general conditions of purchase in respect of grading and quality, as laid down in the original contract with the United Kingdom Ministry of Food, were maintained in the second year of the war. The grading standards continue to be supervised by the New Zealand Meat-producers Board. Claims by the United Kingdom Ministry of Food were practically non-existent during the year, which reflects credit upon the freezing companies and all those responsible for the handling of export meat, including the Railways Department and the shipping companies.

No meat may be tendered for shipment unless it is in good condition, and the Ministry of Food has the right to survey meat upon arrival for quality, as well as the right to weigh cargo upon arrival. Any agreed claims are recoverable by the Marketing Department from the sellers. Instructions issued by the Department from time to time to freezing companies and meat-exporters regarding packing, cutting, trimming, and general get-up of meat for export have been closely observed.

SURVEY OF SEASON.

On the whole, climatic conditions during the season under review were favourable, and a particularly good fattening season was experienced in practically all districts.

Killings, both in numbers and in average weights, were well up to previous figures and quality was well maintained.

In regard to lambs a new record was established, the number of lambs killed for export during the season amounting to 11,240,001 carcasses, which represented an increase of 852,864 carcasses over the previous season.

The seriousness of the shipping situation in February and March, 1941, led the United Kingdom Government to impose a prohibition on the export of baconers, boneless beef (except G.A.Q. ox and cow), boneless veal, chopper pigs, boneless chopper pork, and boneless ewe mutton. This action by the United Kingdom Government necessitated a rationing scheme to regulate the flow of stock to freezing-works, and the Minister of Marketing announced (23rd March, 1941) that the acceptance of stock for freezing for export would be confined to lambs, prime beef, and porker pigs up to 120 lb. weight. This restriction was justified by the necessity for ensuring that no unmanageable position of congestion at freezing-works would occur. It was recognized by the Government that the restrictions created a hardship, particularly for bacon-producers, and as early as possible (having regard to the shipping situation) these restrictions were considerably eased.

At the commencement of the season there was in store in New Zealand and in vessels loading on the coast a quantity of approximately 39,938 tons of past season's meat. The 1940-41 season's contract was for 248,000 tons, from carry-over stocks of 39,938 tons, and from killings for the production year ended 30th September, 1941. The contract contained a proviso that the Ministry of Food, subject to freight being available, would use its best endeavours to lift additional quantities available for export within the limit of its requirements; such quantities to be paid for in terms of the agreement.

It is anticipated that the actual liftings for the twelve months ended 30th September, 1941, will be approximately 265,000 tons, which represents a substantial improvement upon the contract quantity, and will result in a carry-over at 30th September, 1941, of 78,000 tons of export meat.

In addition to the foregoing stocks which will be available for shipment to the United Kingdom in the third year of war, there will be in store on 30th September, 1941, approximately 8,000 tons of boneless beef and boneless ewe mutton awaiting canning. It is expected that this meat will be required to keep the canneries fully employed during the off-season pending the receipt of 1941-42 season's supplies of cow beef and ewe mutton.

STATISTICS.

Weekly returns are obtained by the Department from all freezing companies showing full statistical details in regard to killings, shipments, and stocks in store of all grades and descriptions of meat.

The following statement shows the killings at all works of the various classes of meat from the 1st October, 1940, to the 26th July, 1941. The comparative figures to the nearest date of the previous season are also shown :—

KILLINGS FOR EXPORT.

	North Island.		South Island.		Dominion.	
	To 26th July, 1941.	To 27th July, 1940.	To 26th July, 1941.	To 27th July, 1940.	To 26th July, 1941.	To 27th July, 1940.
Lamb (carcasses) ..	5,809,004	5,305,659	5,405,719	5,073,397	11,214,723	10,379,056
Wether mutton (carcasses) ..	515,963	1,131,700	99,808	175,706	615,771	1,307,406
Ewe mutton (carcasses) ..	860,670	1,219,338	674,897	700,231	1,535,567	1,919,569
Beef (quarters) ..	685,045	672,638	5,905	14,543	690,950	687,181
Boneless (60lb. freight carcasses)	563,590	905,507	42,621	72,646	606,211	978,153
Pork (freight carcasses) ..	972,732	871,682	34,714	33,690	1,007,446	905,372
Offals (freight carcasses) ..	286,507	294,197	111,643	115,551	398,150	409,758
Total (freight carcasses) ..	8,021,833	8,913,030	3,986,551	3,833,871	12,008,384	12,746,901