

HORTICULTURE DIVISION

REPORT OF A. M. W. GREIG, DIRECTOR

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

The weather during the year was generally good for the production of horticultural crops and the extent of any climatic disasters that occurred was restricted.

Orchardists in the Kerikeri district had an excellent season.

In the Auckland district, where there has been a series of wet winters followed by showery springs, these conditions were repeated, and tree losses were caused through sour sap. Widespread hailstorms in November had a noticeable effect on the grade of apples, especially early varieties from Albany and a few other localities.

At Pukekohe it was excessively wet in 1948, 59 in. of rain falling, compared with an average of 47 in. over the past five years.

Fortunately the tornado which swept across Frankton and some suburbs of Hamilton in August did not affect horticultural crops.

On the 14th August, floods covered 30,000 acres of the Poverty Bay flats and destroyed 70 per cent. of the vegetable crops as well as silting up two orchards to a depth of 18 in.

In Hawkes Bay the weather from the spring of 1947 to the middle of 1948 was very good for the production of horticultural crops.

Lack of rain in the early part of 1948 at Ohakune seriously affected the production of vegetables.

A strong wind at Easter, 1948, resulted in 1,500 cases of "windfalls" on the Motueka area.

A hailstorm in November at Mapua which damaged the foliage of pip-fruit trees resulted in lowering of the grade rather than loss of fruit.

Marlborough had the wettest season for twenty years, but this had no adverse effect on crops.

The severe flooding of the Clutha River in October caused a loss of 680 tons of vegetables from 120 acres of market gardens in Otago.

HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTION

(Localities in parentheses are those where one or more members of the Division's staff are stationed.)

Fruitgrowing.—The number of registered orchards in New Zealand at 31st March, 1949, was:—

Taxable (over 120 trees)	..	..	..	2,038
Non-taxable (under 120 trees)	..	..	..	1,855
Total	..	..	..	<u>3,893</u>

(Every orchard the fruit from which is sold or intended for sale is required to be registered under the provisions of the Orchard Registration Regulations 1937.)

Of the 2,038 taxable orchards, over half—1,025 orchards—are between 1 acre and 5 acres in area and 532 from 6 acres to 10 acres in area.

Fruitgrowing will be considered under pip-fruits, stone-fruits, citrus fruits, berry-fruits, and sub-tropical fruits. (For an over-all picture of pip-fruits see Appendix.)