

Increasing frost-fighting equipment, such as fire-pots and alarms, is being installed, particularly in Central Otago, and frost prevention is now responsible for a higher proportion of growers' costs.

Mechanization is not as far advanced in stone-fruit growing as in pip-fruits, possibly because of the smaller areas of plantings. Apart from a greater use of air-blast sprayers and case-making machines and more modern sizing machines, mainly on the larger mixed orchards, no outstanding advances are apparent.

Interest in irrigation, and particularly in modern sprinkler systems, is increasing. It is realized that flooding and furrow methods are inefficient and wasteful of water. On the other hand, high capital cost and doubt about the suitability for orchards of equipment on the market have tended to slow down progress. There is scope for investigations into water requirements of crops and technique of application, as well as into the larger question of availability of water.

There have been no outstanding additions to the therapeutants available. H.E.T.P. is probably the only new insecticide used to any extent, but none of the new fungicides under test can yet be confidently recommended.

Air transport is being used increasingly for cherries grown in Central Otago and Blenheim for North Island markets.

In the following table the estimated crop for the 1949-50 season in the main districts is compared with that of the previous season :—

(Thousands of bushels)

—	Auckland.	Hawke's Bay.	Nelson and Marlborough.	Canterbury.	Otago.	Dominion Total.
Peaches—						
1949-50	60	135	40	4	45	284
1948-49	39	250	59	7	87	442
Nectarines—						
1949-50	1	13	1	..	9	24
1948-49	1	20	2	2	18	43
Apricots—						
1949-50	1	4	..	5	74	84
1948-49	1	2	..	8	118	129
Plums—						
1949-50	33	29	4	3	22	91
1948-49	45	43	9	6	23	126
Cherries—						
1949-50	1	1	3	9	14
1948-49	1	2	2	8	13

CITRUS FRUITS (LEMON, NEW ZEALAND GRAPEFRUIT, AND SWEET ORANGE)

There have been no marked changes during the year in the area of citrus trees planted in the principal commercial districts. At Te Puke and Te Puna, near Tauranga, new citrus orchards have been established. In general, few lemon-trees except of the Meyer variety have been planted during the past ten years, and lemon-production will soon decline unless young trees are planted to replace the ageing lemon-trees.

Production of New Zealand grapefruit will continue to increase for a number of years if existing trees are retained in good condition, because many are still far short of maximum production and comparatively few of the older trees are showing signs of decline.

Weather.—In Auckland, North Auckland, and Bay of Plenty districts the weather was warm and the rainfall average. Conditions in Gisborne were warm, but the rainfall was insufficient. On the average, weather conditions were favourable for the production of citrus fruits.