

Demonstrational work carried out throughout New Zealand has definitely shown the great superiority of the special strains of rye-grass, white clover, and cocksfoot that are now eligible for certification so far as permanence and herbage production are concerned, and there is little doubt that special strain certified grasses and clovers will finally be alone used in the establishment of New Zealand pastures. It has long been recognized that pedigree in grasses and clovers is just as important as in live-stock and in ordinary crops, and the certification methods now adopted, which are based on the research work of the Plant Research Station, are enabling the New Zealand grassland farmer to improve the yield and permanency of his grassland to an astonishing extent.

THE PIG INDUSTRY.

While our sheep and dairying industries have progressed steadily for years past and the volume of exports derived from them has shown a marked increase, the pig industry has made little or no real progress, and to-day, as was the case ten years ago, pigs are regarded mainly as a means of using up dairying by-products and nothing more. Yet New Zealand is eminently adapted for pig-production on a large scale, our pork has a good reputation in British markets, and a much greater quantity could have been exported without any fear of oversupply. It has always been difficult to understand why New Zealand farmers, who in most respects are quick in adopting improved and progressive methods in production and marketing, have failed to make use of their opportunities for building up a large export trade in pork, in spite of the efforts made by advice and general propaganda to induce them to do so.

The food question has no doubt been a factor in this, but the cost involved by the purchase of foodstuffs could be largely avoided if more pig provender were produced on the farm itself. A further point is that in meat-meal, now a well-prepared article, a large supply of highly concentrated food is available in the Dominion at a very reasonable cost, considering its high feeding-value. In combination with roots, it makes a well-balanced food on which pigs do well. Certainly, of late years, the type of pig produced has shown some improvement and a greater interest in pig-production is noticeable. The establishment of a Pig Recording Club in the Waikato (assisted by a grant from the Meat Board) was a progressive move, and it is hoped that similar organizations may be established in other dairying districts.

With a view to organizing a definite forward step in pork-production, arrangements are in hand for setting up a special Pig Industry Committee to go fully into all aspects of the industry and assist in bringing about a large expansion of it on sound lines. This body is composed of representatives of the Meat and Dairy Board, Massey and Lincoln Colleges, bacon companies, pig-breeders, the Farmers' Union, the Waikato Pig Recording Club, and the Research and Agriculture Departments. Its deliberations and recommendations should prove of great value, and it may be noted that its members give their services free of any cost whatever to the Government.

One important matter for discussion by the Committee is the establishment of a properly organized system of grading of pigs, whether intended for export or for local consumption through the medium of bacon factories, and recommendations regarding this will be submitted in due course. Such a system would go far towards establishing improvement both in type and quality, for which there is plenty of scope. The co-operation of freezing companies and others concerned is confidently anticipated, as, though for the time being the overseas market for bacon pigs is unprofitable, there is so good an opportunity for considerably expanding our export of pigs of the porker type that it should be taken advantage of to the fullest extent attainable.

THE NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT.

The administration of this Act entails considerable expenditure in the endeavour to bring about observance of its requirements, and a review of the position to-day and of the results of the efforts of past years raises the question whether this expenditure is worth while. In closely settled areas farmers, in their own interests, should keep weeds under proper control, and most of them do so, especially as by the use of sodium chlorate ragwort can now be effectively and economically dealt with. On larger properties, especially in broken country, this weed is still a nuisance, but on the whole, it is no longer the serious menace it was a few years since. As regards other noxious weeds, blackberry is the worst.

Having regard to all the circumstances it is believed that no serious results would accrue if the Act, as at present constituted, were repealed and replaced by a measure so framed as to enable adequate measures to be taken to deal with any unforeseen development of serious spread of any existing or newly introduced noxious weed, and to give authority to County Councils and urban authorities to take such measures in the event of necessity arising. Local authorities