

DISTRIBUTION OF FERTILIZER SOURCES IN NEW ZEALAND.\*

Province.	Number of Merchants.	Number of Boiling-down Works.	Number of Freezing-works.	Number of Superphosphate Works.	Total.
Auckland .. .. .	52 (25)*	10	3	3	68 (25)
Taranaki .. .. .	28 (17)	2	2	1	33 (17)
Hawke's Bay .. .. .	7	6 (1)	1	..	14 (1)
Wellington .. .. .	49 (27)	5	5	1	60 (27)
Nelson and Marlborough .. .. .	8 (2)	2	2	..	12 (2)
Canterbury .. .. .	42 (33)	5	5 (2)	1	53 (35)
Otago and Southland .. .. .	50 (28)	4	5 (1)	2	61 (29)
Totals .. .. .	236 (132)	34 (1)	23 (3)	8	301 (136)

\* Does not include either co-operative dairy companies or agents not actually selling fertilizers.

Province.	(i) Number of Vendors registered per Form Ag. H/87.	(ii) Number of Vendors registered on Form Ag. H/222.	(iii) Number of Vendors registered on Form Ag. H/87 only.	Total (ii) and (iii).
Auckland .. .. .	68 (25)	199 (37)	13	212 (37)
Taranaki .. .. .	33 (17)	45 (14)	3	48 (14)
Hawke's Bay .. .. .	14 (1)	51 (8)	5 (1)	56 (9)
Wellington .. .. .	60 (27)	83 (25)	16 (2)	99 (27)
Nelson and Marlborough .. .. .	12 (2)	27 (2)	3	30 (2)
Westland .. .. .	..	13	..	13
Canterbury .. .. .	53 (35)	84 (38)	8 (2)	92 (40)
Otago and Southland .. .. .	61 (29)	88 (26)	14 (5)	102 (31)
Totals .. .. .	301 (136)*	590 (150)	62 (10)	652 (160)

\* The figures in parentheses indicate the number of branches of certain firms selling in various parts of the same province, and are included in the aggregates.

*General.*—Administratively, there has been an improvement in the registration situation during the year 1931–32, there being less occasion to refuse registrations or request amendments to registrations and invoice certificates. This also applies in the case of non-registration on the part of vendors and infringements of the fertilizer law generally.

Since the clauses of the Act relating to invoice certificates and registration have operated, there has been a distinct rise in quality of fertilizer goods sold, and careless methods of selling and advertising have been less obvious.

A thorough control has now been secured over registration, &c., which facilitates identification of numerous grades and kinds of plant-food carriers on the market by a system of recording, checking, certificating, and indexing of brands, and the filing of their analytical formulæ. In particular, from knowledge of the products of overseas firms, a careful supervision has been kept on imported brands.

In the past it has been customary for many vendors to leave fertilizer affairs in the hands of general salesmen having little knowledge of the analysis, composition, quality, correct branding, and terminology, &c., of fertilizers. Now, however, the tendency is for specialized officers in trading firms to look after sales and technical matters pertaining to fertilizers, and a keener desire to understand fertilizer affairs has become general. On the other hand, there is still scope for improvement in the education of farmers and salesmen, more particularly concerning the advertising of fertilizers, a matter which has been responsible for much correspondence and discussion during the year.

Connected with the registration of fertilizers is a great deal of advisory and inquiry work of a technical character. This includes the framing and correcting of analytical formulæ in invoice certificates, and the guiding of vendors in choosing suitable brands and describing the quality and composition and nature and percentages of diluents in fertilizers, especially of new or changed materials placed on the market. Correspondence on the nomenclature, valuation, quality, &c., of fertilizers is also involved to a lesser extent with fertilizer purchasers and departmental officers.

*Quality of Proprietary Factory-mixed Fertilizers.*—When registration was instituted under the 1927 Act a large number of imported and locally mixed fertilizers were being sold in misbranded or unbranded packages, and low-grade, diluted, and almost worthless substances were also much more numerous than they are to-day. But, apart from this improvement, the number of distinctive brands of the same or slightly different formulæ carrying, for instance, 1 per cent. of nitrogen and 2 per cent. of potash with a good measure of phosphoric acid, still continues to be unduly high in comparison with the grades of materials recommended by departmental officers and agronomists as being sufficient for soil and crop requirements in the Dominion.

In overseas countries of late there has been a movement in progress both toward materials with higher concentrations of plant-food and to a fewer number of brands. Very many brands in this country differing by only 1 or  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of plant-food are sold for a variety of crops with widely divergent nutritional requirements. If manufacturers were to give more attention to fewer grades of high plant-food content, the farmer would be saved money on such items as freight, bags, handling charges, and manufacturing costs.