

Brents Farm.

This property, situated three miles and a half from Rotorua on the Rotorua-Whakatane Road, comprises 335 acres. The leasehold portion of 294 acres was made freehold during the year under review.

The farm is still used as the base for all stock movements in the Rotorua central area. The pastures are in first-class order and no trouble is being experienced with noxious weeds. The healthy land, covered with "Rotomahana mud," is ideal for the purpose of a central stock depot.

The wool-shed built in the previous year is proving invaluable, and the large night pens, capable of sheltering 1,200 sheep, greatly assisted shearing operations this year. Heavy rains were experienced in the Rotorua district during November and December, and, had it not been for the stock accommodation provided by the night pens, shearing would have been costly.

The work undertaken covered the usual seasonal stock operations and farm management—repairing fences, 140 chains of new fencing, installation of fifteen water-troughs, 62 chains of wire netting around holding paddocks, and top-dressing the 300 acres of grassed land. An additional portable shearing-machine was purchased, and two stands were added to the existing four-stand electric machine. The portable machines save unnecessary droving of large numbers of sheep and are invaluable for the operation of the outlying schemes. Charges on a "per head basis" for shearing are made against the other sections. The head stockman resides on Brents, and between twenty and thirty adult labourers received some measure of work in the shearing, dipping, and general farm activities.

Besides the continual heavy stocking during stock movements, the following complement was carried throughout the year: 463 ewes, 380 wethers, 251 culled lambs, and 48 run cattle.

Korohe.

This is a settlement of 1,658 acres adjoining the Hautu Prison farm near Tokaanu, and should be suitable for sheep and dairy farming when fully developed. About 500 acres consist of hilly country covered in manuka and fern, and the balance of 700 acres comprise river-flats and swamp land, infested at present with blackberry, gorse, and ragwort. The soil conditions vary considerably, but most of the block consists of potential dairying land capable of carrying a rye-grass, cocksfoot, and white-clover pasture.

The block was favourably reported upon by a committee of inspection in May, 1935, and steps will be taken to bring it under the development provisions of the Act early in the coming year. In the meantime employment is being given to a number of relief workers, and during the year under review 88 acres were cleared and stumped, 64 acres were top-dressed, and 16 acres sown down in grass, besides which 172 chains of fencing were erected. At present 220 ewes are being grazed on the property.

Maketu Farm.

This farm, which contains a total area of 1,277 acres, is administered by the Department for the Arawa District Trust Board and is being carried on principally out of revenue from dairying.

The area in grass remains at 900 acres, and during the year a great deal of new development work was undertaken, the principal activities being 389 chains of new fencing, 316 chains of fencing repairs, 80 chains of roading, 229 chains of draining, 174 chains of cleaning and deepening old drains, and the grubbing of 125 acres of gorse and blackberry. A new house was erected for the ploughman during the year.

The five milking herds (392 cows in flush of season) produced 74,220 lb. of butterfat during the season under review, and substantial returns were made from the sale of pigs, sheep, and wool. In the coming season it is proposed to place the five sheds on a share-milking basis, the Department retaining two-thirds of the proceeds from butterfat and one-half from pigs and calves, with the share-milkers meeting certain maintenance costs and rearing sufficient heifer calves for replacing culled stock.

Other live-stock carried during the year, in addition to the dairying herds, was as follows: 77 dry cows, 90 yearling heifers, 100 weaners, 203 Hereford steers, 592 breeding ewes, and 979 wethers.

Maketu : Motiti Island.

A portion of Motiti Island—off the coast from Maketu—was brought under development in 1932 for the purpose of assisting 15 settlers engaged in maize growing on an area of 852 acres.

Despite a poor corn crop this season no further financial assistance was required by the farmers, although the Department received little in the way of repayments on individual loan accounts. Many of the advances to settlers have already been reduced, however, and providing an average crop is harvested next season it is expected that a certain number of the loans will be fully repaid.

Maketu : Pukaingataru.

This is a subdivision of the main Maketu scheme and comprises an area of 211 acres on which two dairy farmers are established. The settlers are self-supporting, and their assignments of cream cheques are sufficient to cover interest and provide a sinking fund to ensure repayments of advances over a reasonable period of years.