

average are on a par with the previous season, whilst the lambing percentages would be on about an average.

Facial eczema has been very prevalent on the lower areas, but on the higher altitudes the position is not so serious. The position is being closely watched by the Department of Agriculture, who are always willing to co-operate with settlers in combating this danger. Whilst the Waikato market has drawn a good number of surplus sheep from this district again this year, the exodus has not been so marked as in previous years.

It is pleasing to note that the cattle-market has commanded higher prices. The chilled-beef trade is rapidly becoming popular, and improved facilities for transport will be of great benefit to the trade.

As predicted last year, the increased use of top-dressing manures has shown the wisdom of such a farming practice, and I am sure that settlers have realized that the policy of applying top-dressing manures is a very payable proposition.

In regard to the dairying industry, there has been a smaller production, mainly on account of the poor season from beginning to end. The spring was late, and the delayed flush did not develop, due to the hot, dry summer, whilst the floods of February and March have hastened the drying-off of herds.

It is recognized that the raising of pigs as a dairy-farming sideline plays a big factor in building up revenue, and I would appeal to all dairy-farmers to pay more attention to this practice, and to see that their pigs are given better housing-accommodation.

During the year the large volume of work involved in dealing with applications under the Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act, 1936, necessitated the setting-up of three committees to inspect and report on all such applications.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(F. R. BURNLEY, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The season ending 30th June, 1937, was the best the farmers in this district have had for many years. The present one, however, will not be so favourable. Owing to the dry autumn and winter, the wool-clip is much lighter, the lambing percentage is less, and the lambs also are lighter than usual. Late rains have been very beneficial, and at present there is an abundance of feed. Stock-prices are being maintained.

The heavy rains, however, have not been beneficial to orchardists, and they have also been in difficulties with frosts. The remaining crop is a good one. A considerable number of Crown tenants applied for relief under the Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act, 1936, and about two-thirds of the applications have now been disposed of. The rents in many cases have been reduced, and arrears of rent remitted. The relief that has been thus granted should enable these settlers to meet their obligations in future.

Heavy floods in February did considerable damage to roads through the northern portion of the district. Land revenue for the year exceeded that for the previous year by £23,000.

TARANAKI.

(A. F. WATERS, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The year commenced with a favourable autumn, feed being plentiful and stock entered the winter in excellent condition. The spring was unusually dry, and the year was noted for its spells of dry weather, the total rainfall being below the average. The summer was much hotter than usual, but the rainfall for three summer months was 50 per cent. higher than the three winter months and there was an abundance of grass in most districts right through to the autumn. Production of butterfat was about the same as in the previous year, and the average dairy-farmer should be in a position to pay his way.

An unfortunate feature of the season was the drop in the price of wool, which has naturally affected the sheep-farmer, but, as this drop was not followed by a corresponding fall in the price of sheep, the position is not so disastrous as in former years. The wool generally was light in condition, but not so seedy as in former years. The lambing percentage was excellent, the average for the whole district being 96 per cent. The fat-lamb trade was up to the usual high standard, and the normal number of fats was sent to the works. The beef- and store-cattle trade was good, and springing heifers were eagerly sought after. Prices for all classes of cattle have been remarkably good. Pig-raising is receiving more attention, in the shape of better housing-conditions, and revenue from this source is increasing, and an improvement in both numbers and quality is reported.

Hay and ensilage crops were lighter than usual, and there is a tendency to go out of root crops, owing probably to the ravages of the white butterfly and diamond-back moth. Farmers seem very much alive now to the need of adequate manures, and the amount of top-dressing applied was above that of the previous season.

In parts of the district the ragwort position is now much better, but in the north it is as bad as ever. That it can be controlled has been proved, and many dairy-farmers can still milk cows and run sufficient sheep to keep the pest in check. Gorse and blackberry are fairly well controlled.

A feature of the year's work has been that of inspecting, valuing, and furnishing reports on farms concerned in applications under the Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act. The total number of applications in which the Department is directly concerned in this district was 401, and reports on these have been almost completed, only a few remaining.

The revenue for the year exceeded that of the previous year by over £2,000.