

On the Land

GENERAL.

According to the 1913 census the Commonwealth possessed 85,057,402 sheep, 11,483,882 cattle, 2,521,983 horses, and 800,505 pigs.

There are 50 acres under lucerne at the Mounahaki Experimental Farm, while 120 tons of lucerne hay are in stack, and it is estimated there are 30 tons of hay yet to harvest.

A source of contamination of milk and cream is allowing fowls to wander near the dairy or place where the utensils are kept. Fowl-droppings contain germs which cause cream to become frothy when in the churn, and cheese to swell up with gas when in the ripening.

The oat crop at the Weraroa Experimental Farm is the best that has been harvested for a number of years. The wheat crop is also a very satisfactory one. Though the dry season in the north has necessarily affected the crops at the Ruakura Farm of Instruction, the oat crop promises to furnish a fair yield of grain.

In Denmark, when the Association of Cattle breeders was inaugurated for the purpose of improving the quality of the cattle by the use of selected bulls, it worked so well under the 'control unions' that the average yield of butter from the 'control union' cows in a comparatively short time exceeded by 33½ per cent. the yield of the ordinary cow of the country.

The number of carcasses of mutton carried by steamers leaving New Zealand during the first five months of the war was one million in excess of the total carried in any previous year. For the first eight months of the present exporting year a total of 216,000 carcasses have been exported from Auckland, whereas during the whole of the three preceding years only 215,000 carcasses were exported from Auckland.

A good deal has been said since war broke out of the value of rye to such countries as Russia and Germany. Not only is it a useful tonic grain, especially on land not suitable for wheat or barley, but it forms an important foodstuff for the population of Continental countries. Russia sows approximately 65,000,000 acres with rye, Germany 16,000,000, Austria 5,000,000, France 3,000,000, Denmark 8,000,000, Belgium 600,000, Holland 500,000.

As a result of experiments the specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture have discovered that a small amount of ordinary borax sprinkled daily on manure will effectively prevent the breeding of typhoid or house-fly. Similarly, the same substance applied to garbage, refuse, open toilets, damp floors, and crevices in stables, cellars, or markets, will prevent fly-eggs from hatching. Borax will not kill the adult fly, nor prevent it from laying eggs, but its thorough use will prevent any further breeding.

There was a very heavy yarding of store sheep at Addington last week, but small entries of fat sheep and lambs, and a fair entry of fat cattle. Store sheep sold well at the advanced rates recorded at late sales. Prime beef was firm, but indifferent sorts were easier. Fat lambs and fat sheep were firmer. Fat Lambs. Best, 18s 6d to 21s 3d; others, 15s to 18s. Fat Sheep.—Prime wethers, 21s 6d to 24s 3d; others, 17s 9d to 21s; prime ewes, 20s 6d to 26s; medium, 17s to 20s; others, 11s to 16s 6d; merino ewes, 9s 6d. Fat Cattle. Ordinary steers, £6 12s 6d to £12; extra, to £18; ordinary heifers, £5 to £8 10s; extra, to £11 2s 6d; ordinary cows, £5 10s to £8 10s; extra, to £13 17s 6d. Price of beef per 100lb, 32s to 44s. Pigs. Choppers, £3 to £4 17s 6d; ordinary baconers, £2 10s to £2 17s 6d; heavy baconers, £3 to £3 8s; extra heavy baconers, to £3 13s (price per lb, 5½d); ordinary porkers, £1 10s to £1 14s; heavy porkers, £1 16s to £2 (price per lb,

5½d); large stores, £1 5s to £1 9s; medium, 19s to £1 4s 7d; small, 11s to 18s; weaners, 3s to 7s 6d.

There were only moderate entries at Burnside last week, when prices for fat sheep and lambs were firm at previous week's rates. Fat Cattle.—211 head yarded, of which a good proportion were of good quality. Export buyers were not operating, and, as the yarding was more than sufficient for butchers' requirements, prices were lower than previous week's rates by 10s to 15s per head. Quotations: Best bullocks, £14 to £16; medium, £12 to £13 5s; light do, £9 10s to £10 10s; best cows and heifers, £9 10s to £11; extra, to £12 10s; medium, £7 10s to £8 5s; light, £5 10s to £6 10s. Fat Sheep.—2188 penned. A moderate yarding. A good number of very good sheep came forward, and met a good sale. Quotations: Best wethers, 26s to 28s 6d; extra, to 31s 9d; good to medium, 22s 6d to 24s; light, 16s to 19s; best ewes, 23s to 25s; extra, to 27s; medium to good, 19s to 21s; light, 15s to 17s. Fat Lambs. 1076 penned. A small yarding, consisting mainly of moderate quality. The demand was good for prime lambs, and late rates were maintained. Unfinished lambs met a poor sale, and were difficult to dispose of. Quotations: Prime lambs, 18s 6d to 20s 6d; extra, to 25s 6d; medium, 15s 6d to 17s; unfinished, 12s 6d to 14s. There was a moderate entry of pigs, which sold at prices on a par with those ruling at late sales.

THE BLACKBERRY PEST.

The use of kerosene spray as a means of destroying blackberry has been tried with success in the Thames district, says Mr. F. R. Boul, of the Department of Agriculture, who reports on the experiment as follows: 'The manager of the Nicholls Estate (Mr. Harris) informed me that he has sprayed blackberry with kerosene, undiluted, with the very best results, the blackberry being completely destroyed, while the grass around about commenced to grow again after the first rain. Kerosene was first tried about eighteen months ago, and no blackberry has come again where the spraying was done. Mr. Harris says he is so satisfied with the results secured that he is obtaining a large consignment of kerosene to spray with this year. The cost is no doubt considerable, but the blackberry seems to be destroyed with one spraying, thus saving further expense of cutting or spraying.'

DEHORNING CALVES.

There is no doubt about the gain in a milking herd which is hornless, either naturally or by treatment (says the *Australasian*). Anyone who has doubts on this point should see the Red Polled herd at Werribee Research Farm. They feed contentedly from troughs in the yard without any rushing about, and horning of quieter animals by the would-be bully of the herd. The dehorning of adult cows is rarely practised now, being rightly considered cruelty to animals, besides which the shock is detrimental to both flesh and milk; and there is a danger from poisoning of the wound. The best method is to treat the horn in the early stages. As soon as the horn can be felt beneath the skin, which will be when the calf is a few days old, the hair should be clipped off the button, the skin over the immature horn wetted, and the place rubbed with a stick of caustic potash. Some care must be used, as the whole button must be covered, but the caustic must not be allowed to run on to the face. One application is generally sufficient, as the caustic is powerful in its action. Horns a couple of inches in length may also be removed in the same way, but the base of the horn must be thoroughly dressed, and great care is necessary to keep the caustic from spreading to the surrounding parts. Bluestone and sulphate of iron can also be used as applications, but they act much more slowly. The best plan is to make a saturated solution with boiling water, and apply with a small brush while warm.

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