

On the Land

GENERAL.

In round figures the United Kingdom takes beef and mutton to the value of thirty millions sterling; but 60 per cent. of the mutton, beef, and lamb consumed is still produced in the British Isles, and in 1914 the farmers in the United Kingdom supplied 1,100,000 tons of meat out of the 1,800,000 tons consumed.

As a splendid grazing district, Pahiata has come into considerable prominence this season. It is estimated that about 7000 sheep and 400 head of cattle have been taken to the district by rail from the drought-stricken areas of Hawke's Bay lately (says the *Pahiata Herald*).

'The law with regard to noxious weeds is a farce,' said the chairman of the Stratford County Council at the monthly meeting. 'So long as a settler cuts a quantity—be it ever so small—of weeds he is safe from prosecution. There should also be passed legislation compelling a settler to burn all weeds out. It is no use allowing weeds to remain on top of the soil when cut; they may just as well be left standing.'

As comparing the prices of meat 17 years ago with the present prices, the following extracts from an old account bill of Messrs. Stanners Bros., old Eltham butchers, will be interesting:—18lb of beef 4s 6d, 14lb of mutton 2s 11d, 4lb of sausages 1s 6d, hind-quarter of lamb 2s 6d, 4lb rump steak 1s. It will be noticed (says the *Argus*) that present prices are nearly treble the above prices, while wages, according to an old Eltham resident, have not risen anything like proportionately.

At Addington last week there were moderate entries of fat stock, but there was again a very heavy yarding of store sheep. The attendance was good. Fat cattle were somewhat easier, there being no demand for export on account of the want of space. Store sheep sold at about previous week's rates. Fat Lambs. There was a moderate entry, and the offerings included a large line of prime heavy lambs from the West Coast, which attracted considerable attention. The quality of the remainder of the yarding was only moderate. Best lambs, 18s to 22s 1d; others, 13s to 17s 6d. Fat Cattle.—Extra good steers, to £14 10s; ordinary steers, £7 10s to £10; extra heifers, to £11; ordinary heifers, £5 5s to £8; extra cows, to £15; ordinary cows, £4 17s 6d to £8 10s. Price of beef per 100lb, 21s to 43s. Fat Sheep.—Prime wethers, 21s 6d to 24s 7d; others, 16s 6d to 21s; prime ewes, 20s to 25s 6d; medium, 15s 6d to 19s 6d; others, 11s 6d to 15s; merino wethers, 11s to 19s 5d. Pigs.—There was a large yarding of fats, and prices generally were easier. Choppers, £2 10s to £5 10s; baconers, £2 7s 6d to £4 (equal to 5½d to 5½d per lb); porkers, £1 6s 6d to £1 18s (equal to 5½d to 5½d per lb). A smaller yarding of store pigs met with a better sale.

There were medium yardings at Burnside last week, and prices for all good sorts were firm at late rates. Fat Cattle.—One hundred and fifty head came forward, the yarding consisting of medium to good steers and heifers. This number was about equal to the requirements of the trade, and competition was firm at previous week's rates. Quotations: Prime bullocks, £17 12s 6d; good bullocks, £14 to £15 15s; medium bullocks, £11 10s to £13; light and unfinished, £8 10s to £10 10s; prime heifers, £10 to £12 17s 6d; good heifers, £8 to £9 10s. Fat Sheep.—A fair yarding of 2877 was penned. Prime wethers were in short supply, the greater proportion of the yarding being ewes, of which a fair number were extra heavy. For wethers there was a keen demand, while all medium ewes were well competed for by exporters. Quotations: Extra prime wethers to 34s; prime do., 26s to 28s; prime to good do., 22s to 24s; light do., from 17s to 20s; extra prime ewes, to 29s 9d; prime do., 24s to 26s; prime to good do., 21s to 23s 6d; medium do., 17s 6d to 19s. Fat Lambs.—A medium yarding of 1116 came forward.

The bulk of the yarding was only medium quality, but there were some pens of exceptionally heavy lambs. Prices for all freezing qualities were firm, at previous week's rates, but unfinished sorts were hard to dispose of. One small line of four lambs realised the high price of 36s 9d. Quotations: Prime lambs, £1 to £1 4s; good, 17s to 19s; light and unfinished, from 12s 6d to 16s. There was an entry of 56 fat pigs for which prices were on a par with previous week's rates.

THE OBJECT OF APPLYING FERTILISERS.

When a farmer applies a fertiliser to the soil, what does he do it for? He is simply supplying so many pounds of food to his plants, just as he gives rations of fodder to his live stock.

The crop, as it grows, consumes or assimilates, besides other substances, a certain quantity of nitrogen, phosphate of lime, and potash, and when we put on the soil dressings of nitrate of soda, superphosphate, kainit, or other fertilisers we are providing the crop with a stock of food for the period of its growth.

Thus a dressing of 1½cwt nitrate of soda to the acre furnishes 20lb of nitrogen, equivalent to about 24lb of ammonia; 3cwt of superphosphate furnishes 87lb of soluble phosphate of lime; 2cwt of kainit furnishes 29lb of potash.

BONE MANURES.

Bone meal and crushed bones may be classed among the oldest forms of manure; they are mentioned in the agricultural literature of the past century, and always recommended for their excellent effect on grass lands and pastures (says *Farm, Field, and Fireside*).

In this country their value seems to have been especially appreciated, because we imported large quantities from the Continent, thus depriving Continental farmers of valuable material, and to such an extent did this occur that agricultural experts on the Continent raised a protest against such shipments, and accused us, in language not very polite, of being grabbers and of inflicting injury to their country, although their people appeared glad to get good English gold in exchange for the shipments.

Times have changed since that period, and now English and Continental farmers compete for supplies of bone material from South America and other parts of the world.

Moreover, the use of bone material has been rendered more economical by the treatment of bones with acid. Few farmers now think of applying raw bone meal, as they know that better results can be obtained by applications of good bone manures.

From their first introduction dissolved bones have retained a high reputation, because from the results obtained from their use farmers have recognised that a well-made bone manure is one of the best forms in which money can be expended with a fair prospect of a remunerative return.

The advantage of a bone manure over a purely mineral manure, such as superphosphate, consists in its organic character.

In pure dissolved bones or vitriolised bones—i.e., bones and acid only—the organic nature of the manure is very distinct, as in addition to the percentage of phosphate rendered soluble in water they contain an almost equal percentage softened by the acid, but of which the bone structure has not been completely broken up, as well as about 3 per cent. of ammonia, all from the bones, so that the incorporation of the manure in the soil assists and encourages bacterial life, besides supplying plant nourishment. Well-made dissolved bones and bone compounds can be depended upon to produce good results in pastures, meadows, turnips, and swedes, and can be employed with advantage on barley. They are not too stimulating, and yet nourish the crop, producing a fine sample.

Ye men that go shooting, if you require a Gun that will shoot straight and some ammunition that will kill, consult Smith and Laing's stock, Invercargill.

'Pattillo'

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