

On the Land

GENERAL.

The fact that eighty calves have been reared at the Ruakura Farm of Instruction this season without death or illness is further proof of the value of the 'dry' system of rearing.

Last month 15 acres at the Ruakura Farm of Instruction were sown with prairie-grass and clovers, in order to give this undoubtedly valuable fodder-grass a thorough test on practical lines.

The Berkshire studs of the Moumahaki and Ruakura Experimental Farms are proving very popular throughout the Dominion. All the pigs raised meet with ready sale, stud animals having been even supplied to Australian States.

The poorest portion of the nursery of the Ruakura Farm of Instruction, where it was always difficult to control couch, was sown thickly last autumn with barley and horse-beans. This was dug in during the early spring. At the present time it is growing crops of beans and peas which are exhibiting a richer-colored foliage and finer development than crops growing in other sections of the nursery. Obviously this is principally due to the moist condition of the soil brought about by the heavy green-manuring, which effectively prevented the soil being dried up by the prolonged period of dry weather.

A field on the Moumahaki Experimental Farm which is the admiration of visitors this season is a 15-acre block of lucerne growing on one of the higher undulating portions of the property. Established in November of 1913, it is now the best money-making proposition on the farm. In the beginning of December the first cut was made for hay, the measured stack indicating 35 tons capacity. The second cut was obtained on January 25, when about 40 tons of hay were secured. Two more cuttings for hay could be probably secured this season, but owing to the dry spell the lucerne is being used at the present time in a green state.

At Addington last week the store sheep pens were again fully occupied with a very heavy entry, and there were moderate entries in other departments. There was a good demand for the better class of breeding ewes at rather firmer prices, but there was little change in other descriptions. Fat cattle sold at about late rates, and fat lambs and fat sheep met with a dull sale. There was a small entry of fat lambs, totalling 1575, some being very prime and others only in forward store condition. Extra prime, to 23s 9d; prime, 16s 6d to 20s; others, 10s to 16s. About eight races were filled with fat sheep, ewes forming the greater part of the yarding. There was a dull sale for all but prime sheep at easier rates. Extra prime wethers, to 29s 3d; prime wethers, 21s to 24s 8d; others, 16s to 20s 6d; prime ewes, 19s to 24s; medium ewes, 15s to 18s 6d. The entry in the fat cattle section showed an increase compared with the previous week, the number penned being 313 head, as compared with 270 last week. Extra good steers, to £16 5s; ordinary steers, £7 7s 6d to £10; extra heifers, to £12 15s; ordinary heifers, £5 to £8; extra cows, to £12; ordinary cows, £5 5s to £8 10s. Price of beef per 100lb, 31s to 43s. There was a fair yarding of fat pigs, but the quality covered a wide range, indifferently finished animals being numerous. The demand was not keen. Choppers, £2 to £4; light baconers, £2 7s 6d to £2 17s 6d; heavy baconers, £3 to £3 7s; extra heavy baconers, £3 10s to £3 14s 6d.

At Burnside last week 155 head of fat cattle were yarded. Butchers were not operating keenly owing to the approach of the holidays, and prices had receded to the extent of about 15s per head. Bidding was at no time very brisk. The yarding comprised a large proportion of cow and heifer beef and light-weight steers, there being very few heavy bullocks. Best bullocks brought £15 to £16; medium, £11 10s to £12 10s; others, £9 10s to £10 10s; best cows, £8 to £10; me-

dium, £6 10s to £7 10s; others, £5 10s to £6. Fat Sheep.—2505, a full yarding. Some of the exporters were not operating in mutton, and as a consequence the sale was inclined to drag at times. Owing to the freezing works being nearly full and there being only one day to kill before the holidays, exporters were naturally reluctant to bid to any extent. Prices consequently receded about 1s per head all round. The yarding comprised a large proportion of ewes, with only one or two prime heavy-weight wethers. Best wethers realised 23s 6d to 25s 6d; medium, 21s to 22s 6d; others, 19s 6d to 20s 6d; best ewes, 20s to 22s; extra, 23s to 25s; medium, 15s to 18s 6d; others, 10s to 13s 6d. Fat Lambs.—1232 penned, a small yarding. Prices had advanced as compared with previous week. Best lambs sold at 20s to 22s 6d; medium, 17s to 19s 6d; others, 14s 6d to 15s 6d. The supply of pigs was about equal to the demand, and consequently prices showed little alteration from those ruling lately.

HOW A BREED IS FORMED.

As most people know, a breed is a variety. In plants a new variety of a species is produced by crossing one variety on another. In the case of crossing two species of the genus, to produce a hybrid, the fertility is generally destroyed, and the hybrid cannot be perpetuated. In crossing two animals or plants of the same species but differing one from the other, the product is fertile, though not in so great a degree as in animals or plants of a like kind. The descendants will partake more strongly of one parent than the other, and these variations, in some cases, crop out after generations. This striking back to some remote ancestor is not infrequent amongst shorthorns, notwithstanding the extreme care taken in breeding, and the many years that have passed since the particular cross was made. On the other hand the Devons breed constant to type or nearly so. Herefords also retain this constancy in general character to a remarkable degree, for the reason that they are an original breed, and not like the shorthorns, made up of a mixed lineage, and developed within a comparatively short time.

DRYING OFF DAIRY COWS.

Most farmers look upon the drying of cows as a very serious operation (says a writer in the *English Agricultural Gazette*). Many a cow has had its value detracted owing to the carelessness of the attendants at this stage of her lactation period. Farmers have widely different views as to how long a cow should be dry, but, generally speaking, from six to twelve weeks is the usual time. The former period is probably too short a rest, and twelve weeks too lengthy for an average milker; the latter period, however, is certainly not too long for a cow giving a large yield of milk, and she will amply repay for the rest when she calves again. On the other hand, six weeks is quite sufficient for a poorer milker.

The reason for drying cows is to give them a period of rest, so that they can recuperate or recover from the strain which the yielding of a large supply of milk has placed upon them, and also to enable them to better nourish the foetus. The cows which most benefit by the rest—i.e., the deep-milking ones—are those which are the most difficult to dry, while those which need little or no rest usually take French leave for a pretty long while. To dry a deep and persistent milker we should experience little difficulty, providing that we take an intelligent interest in the work. When it is time to commence drying the cow we should start by not milking her quite dry at each milking, and gradually leaving a little more in the udder at each successive time. A cow usually gives only what milk is required of her, and so by not taking all the milk from her we cause a gradual drying effect upon her supply.

Lampware is going to be very dear buying. Hadn't you better make a selection from Smith and Laing's stock, Invercargill, before they go up in price?

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