

ON THE LAND

Donald Reid and Co., Ltd., report having held their fortnightly sale of rabbitskins, etc., on Monday, July 14, when a large catalogue was submitted to a full attendance of buyers. Competition was keen throughout, and our catalogue was cleared on a par with previous sale. The report is as follows:—Runners and suckers 11½d to 17½d, light racks 20d to 21½d, racks 25d to 26½d, early autumns 46d, autumns 57d, early winters 65d, incoming 63d, outgoing 66d, prime does 91d, prime bucks 75d, first does 85½d, first bucks 68d, second bucks 65½d, second does 81d, prime winter blacks 119d, second winter blacks 110d, autumn blacks 56d, incoming blacks 99d, first winter fawn 47d, broken 30½d, horsehair 13½d, hareskins 18½d.

At Burnside last week 132 fat cattle were yarded, the majority being of medium quality. Competition was keen, at prices from 10s to 20s in advance of the previous week's rates. Best bullocks £22 to £26 2s 6d, medium £19 10s to £21, lighter £15 to £17, prime heifers £15 10s to £17 5s, medium £13 to £15. Fat sheep: 1327 yarded, consisting mostly of medium to inferior quality, with a few pens of good sheep. Competition was keen, and prices for prime quality showed an advance of from 1s to 2s per head on the previous week's rates. Inferior sheep were slow of sale, and prices came barely up to the previous week's rates. Prime wethers 52s to 58s 6d, medium 44s to 51s, light to 38s. Fat lambs: 482 penned; a small yarding of medium quality. Prices were practically on a par with the previous week's rates. Best 25s to 33s, medium to 20s. Pigs: Extra heavy baconers to £7 2s, heavy £6 to £6 15s, medium £4 15s to £5 10s, equal to 8½d per lb; heavy porkers £3 10s to £4, medium £2 10s to £3 5s, equal to 9½d to 10d per lb, choppers £5 to £9, medium stores £2 to £2 14s, small stores 30s to 36s, weaners 8s 6d to 17s 6d.

At the Addington market last week there was a good yarding of fat stock, and although it was practically only a butchers' market, prices were very firm. There was a good attendance, especially of those interested in store sheep, for which there was a fair demand at firmer rates. The few lines of fat hoggets entered were sold among the fat sheep, and their values were affected by the absence of export buyers. Competition for fat sheep, on the other hand, showed an advance, in many instances the butchers requiring full supplies. Fat cattle were also firm. There was some business done by export buyers in the lighter conditions sorts. There was very little demand for store cattle. Pigs sold well. Fat sheep: Extra prime wethers to 62s 6d, prime 46s to 50s 3d, medium 36s to 45s, lighter 29s 4d to 35s 6d, merino wethers 23s 6d to 29s 6d, extra prime ewes 60s 6d, prime 40s to 48s, medium 35s to 39s 6d, lighter 22s 6d to 32s 6d, prime hoggets 33s to 42s, lighter 20s 9d to 32s 6d. Fat cattle: Extra prime steers to £29, prime £19 to £23 5s, ordinary £9 10s to £18 15s, prime heifers £12 17s 6d to £17 12s 6d, ordinary £9 to £12 10s, extra prime cows £20, prime £11 15s to £16 7s 6d, ordinary £8 10s to £10 15s.

BONEDUST.

This is one of the most useful of all artificial manures, if it can be called artificial, and if only one manure is used, it is safe to say that this should be the one (says a writer in the *N.Z. Farmer*). It is prepared by boiling the raw bones to extract the fat, after which they are ground into a somewhat gritty meal, which contains from 4 to 5 per cent of nitrogen and 45 to 48 per cent of phosphate. Though the fat is removed the cartilage remains, and this has the effect of retarding the breaking up of the particles, so that it is a slow-acting manure. The finer it is ground the quicker it acts, as particles come into closer contact with the soil. In soils of an acid nature such as is common in most gardens, or as an ingredient of potting composts where it is brought into closer contact with the soil, it is much quicker acting. Lime added to it rather retards the action, and for this reason it is advisable to use a certain quantity of superphosphate with the bonedust when

it is applied to a crop which matures quickly. Phosphorous, the principal ingredient of bonedust, is the element which is considered to be mostly required in the production of flowers and fruit. As bonedust is slow acting it is advisable in the case of gardens where the ground is usually prepared during autumn and winter to apply it at the time of digging; it is then in an available condition in the spring for the crop. It is often recommended to sow the manure in the drills at the time of planting, and for field cultivation this has certain advantages, but for garden purposes where two or three crops are taken off the same ground in a season, it is best spread broadcast. It should be applied at the rate of two or three ounces to the square yard. It is particularly valuable for top-dressing fruit trees, roses, asparagus, herbaceous borders, chrysanthemums, sweet peas, shrubs, trees, and all vegetable crops. For potting soils it should be mixed with the soil at the rate of about a pound to the bushel of soil. One important point to be noted with it is that the more it is incorporated with the soil the better it is. Consequently whether used in the garden or in potting soils, it should be mixed as freely as possible. For lawns it should be applied late in autumn or during winter at the rate of about a pound to eight square yards. It improves the color and quality of the grass without undue encouragement of the clovers which is such a feature of the use of basic slag. For this reason it is good for tennis and bowling greens. It does not encourage the baneful horizontal growth of "cocksfoot" which is often the result of nitrogenous manure. Fine weather should be chosen for applying it, otherwise that part which is in fine dust, and therefore the most valuable, will be blown away and lost. It can be stored dry for any length of time; it can be procured in bulk and used as required.

TOBACCO DRYING AND CURING.

In the current number of the *Journal of Agriculture* the Horticultural Division of the N.Z. Department of Agriculture supplies the following information on the above subject, in answer to a correspondent:—The process of tobacco curing varies according to the class of leaf desired, and experience is necessary to secure even moderately good results. The first steps are taken while the plants are growing, these being topped in time to prevent flowering. All suckers and side shoots should have been previously removed, as well as small or damaged leaves at the lower part of the stems. The time to cut is when yellow blotches begin to show on the leaves. The plants have to be hung up to dry. To enable this to be done the stems, before cutting, are split down the centre to within about 6in of the ground; the plant is then cut close to the ground. When cut, the plant is to be left on the ground till thoroughly wilted; put the butt end towards the sun; wilting will take four or five hours. The plants are then placed astride sticks and taken to a well-ventilated shed. In the shed is a rack built so that each end of the stick rests on a rail; a stick 4½ft long will hold eight plants; a space of 10in should be left between the rows of plants. Drying is complete when the stems of the leaves become a brown color and break when bent. The leaves are then stripped off one by one till the operator gets a "hand," which may be 12 or 16 leaves; then a leaf is folded to 2in or 3in in width and bound around the base of the "hand" to keep them together, the end of the binding leaf being tucked in to fasten it. The "hands" are packed in a pile secure from drying winds or wet, the butts being laid outward, the tips of the leaves overlapping. The "hands" are pressed down by kneeling on them while packing, and afterwards weighted with heavy planks. The pile is then covered with sacking, or some such fabric, to protect the exposed leaves, and in this condition is left for about a month, during which time the sweating process goes on, and, with proper management, a uniform color is secured. To complete the curing commercially, further processes are undergone in which heat is applied.

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