

On the Land

GENERAL.

Lucerne can be cut too often, with subsequent exhaustion of the plant. From three to four cuts per season are sufficient.

To test the validity of seeds, place 100 in a dish of sand, moisten and keep in a warm place, until the sprouts appear.

In Cornwall, liming the land is held to be injurious to oat crops. Shell sand is carted on to the upland heather, which is now being broken up by the plough.

Unbroken smut balls can be soaked in any of the pickles for hours, without killing the spores contained in them. Smut balls, therefore, should be always skimmed off.

A landlord in Cornwall gave a tenant notice to quit, because he sold milk instead of butter, and thus had no separated milk on which to rear pigs, and return to the soil some of the elements taken out.

There were average entries in all departments at Burnside last week. Prices for fat lambs and pigs were a shade better than those ruling at previous sales, whilst, owing to the large yarding, fat cattle were, if anything, slightly lower. There was a yarding of 220 head of fat cattle, consisting chiefly of medium quality bullocks and heifers, with a few pens of good cattle. Quotations: Best bullocks, £11 10s to £12 10s; extra, to £14 17s 6d; medium to good, £10 to £11; light, £8 10s to £9; best cows and heifers, £8 10s to £9 15s; extra, to £11; medium to good, £6 10s to £7 10s. Two thousand and twenty-seven fat lambs were penned, consisting chiefly of good quality lambs. Freezing buyers were operating freely, and prices were fully equal to last week's rates. Quotations: Best lambs, 18s 6d to 20s; extra good, to 25s 3d; medium to good, 15s 6d to 17s 6d; light, 13s to 14s 6d. There was a fairly large yarding (3637) of fat sheep, consisting chiefly of medium weight wethers and ewes, with a few pens of heavy sheep. Quotations: Prime wethers, 20s to 23s 6d; extra, to 30s; medium to good, 18s to 19s 6d; light, 16s to 17s; prime ewes, 18s to 20s; extra heavy, to 28s; medium to good, 12s 6d to 16s. The fat pigs forward totalled 55, and the stores 60. Prices for baconers and porkers were a shade better. Store pigs also sold well. Quotations: Suckers, 13s to 17s; slips, 17s to 24s; stores, to 28s; porkers, 33s to 45s; light baconers, 55s; heavy baconers, to 72s.

At Addington last week the yarding of stock, especially of sheep of all classes, was again a very large one, and there was a good attendance. Store sheep maintained a strong demand; fat lambs advanced about 9d per head, and fat cattle were irregular, but prices on the whole were better. Fat pigs sold at about previous week's rates; fat sheep were firmer; store cattle were dull of sale, but there was a keen demand for dairy cows at higher prices. In fat lambs the prices were equal to 5½d to 5¾d per lb. Tegs made 17s 6d to 21s 6d; ordinary freezing weights, 15s to 17s 9d; and lighter, 13s 9d to 14s 9d. The yarding of fat sheep again totalled about 6000; the quality generally was good to prime. Prime wethers made 19s 6d to 22s 7d; lighter, 14s 8d to 19s; prime ewes, 16s 6d to 21s 6d; medium, 14s to 16s; aged and light, 10s to 13s 6d. The entries of fat cattle totalled 235 head. The sale opened at prices on a par with those ruling on April 2, but as the market proceeded the demand was erratic. Compared with the previous week the prices showed an advance of 1s per 100lb. Steers made £7 7s 6d to £11; extra, to £15; heifers, £6 15s to £9; extra, to £11 15s; and cows £5 2s 6d to £10 10s. There was an average entry of fat pigs, which met with a good demand, prices being about the same as the previous week. Choppers made £3 to £5 8s; heavy baconers, 70s to 74s; and lighter sorts, 55s to 65s, equal to 5½d to 6d per lb. Heavy porkers realised 47s to 52s; and lighter sorts, 38s to 45s, equivalent to 6d per lb.

NEW ZEALAND EXPORTS.

The New Zealand exports for the 12 months ended March 31 last totalled £20,580,109, as against £17,604,870 for the previous 12 months.

Increases were recorded in the following articles (the figures for the previous year being given in parentheses):—Butter, £2,058,683 (£1,776,440); cheese, £1,859,179 (£1,297,088); frozen beef, £324,578 (£250,304); frozen mutton carcasses, £1,500,728 (£1,151,439); frozen lamb, £1,825,342 (£1,750,236); oats, £468,880 (£37,502); potatoes, £150,061 (£6439); hemp, £483,353 (£310,884); tow, £41,005 (£23,289); kauri gum, £430,200 (£368,228); grain and pulse other than wheat and oats, £163,008 (£101,861); hops, £20,698 (£11,594); hides, £234,735 (£159,835); skins (all kinds), £234,735 (£159,835); tallow, £663,476 (£566,373); timber, £475,230 (£468,181); wool, £8,065,351 (£6,579,074).

The following articles showed a decrease:—Frozen mutton—legs and pieces, £43,522 (£46,155); wheat, £95,414 (£197,623); rabbits, £50,851 (£78,041); gold, £1,305,217 (£1,747,877).

ORGANIC MANURES: WHAT THEY ARE.

The name 'organic manure' is given to all manures having an animal or vegetable origin in contradistinction to those which have a distinctly mineral origin, known as mineral manures or chemical fertilisers, such as superphosphate, basic slag, nitrate of soda, etc.

The best known of the organic manures is, of course, farmyard manure. It possesses the great advantage that it contains all the principal elements of plant food, as may be easily understood when its origin is considered. It is a mixture of the excreta of animals with the material in which they are littered. The relative value of farmyard manure depends on various circumstances, such as the kind of animal producing it, the age of the animal, the food of the animals, condition of the manure, etc.

The dung of horses and sheep is called 'hot'; it is dry, ferments rapidly, and is difficult to preserve. It is suitable for cold soils, and for vegetables of rapid growth. The dung of cattle and pigs is not of such a heating character, and decomposes more slowly.

When possible it is a good plan to mix the two classes of dung together, to obtain the average best quality.

According to Mr. Hall, the examination of a large number of analyses at Rothamsted shows that farmyard manure contains about three-quarters of its weight in water, about $\frac{2}{3}$ of 1 per cent. of nitrogen, $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 per cent. of phosphoric acid, and $\frac{1}{3}$ of 1 per cent. potash, or, per ton, about 15lb of nitrogen, 5lb of phosphoric acid, and 7lb of potash. The composition, he adds, varies very greatly, both with the nature and feeding of the animals and the treatment and storage the manure receives.

Farmyard manure, carelessly kept, loses especially its nitrogen and potash. To neglect the proper management of such a valuable substance is equivalent to throwing money away.

If one simply compared the proportion of plant nourishment in farmyard manure and chemical fertilisers, it might be thought economical to replace the bulky organic manure almost entirely by the concentrated fertilisers. Such a practice, however, would be very ill-judged, because mineral fertilisers cannot take the place of farmyard manure except to a certain extent. Farmyard manure contains, in addition to plant food, a substance of great importance—'humus.'

Another organic manure that has played a distinguished roll in agriculture is Peruvian guano. It is purely organic, being the excreta and debris of sea birds, deposited in the dry regions of Peru. It still comes over in considerable quantities, and is recognised as about the best and safest manure a farmer can employ.

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