On the Land

GENERAL.

The British Government grant for the improvement of light-horse breeding is about £40,000 per annum.

Give all the hay the horse will clean up at the night feed, but give only a small quantity in the morning and at noon, and if he be a driving horse feed only a grain feed at midday and hay morning and night.

In pig-breeding, selection should be made on the points of good broad back at the loin, well meated leg down to the hock and knee joints. There should be as thick meat on the inside as on the outside of the leg, with good heart room, and straightness on the back from shoulders to ham. The hind half of the animal should be the largest and heaviest, for in that part lies the highest-priced meat. The butchers and meat-sellers select the thick-backed heavy-hammed pigs.

At Addington last week there were fairly large entries of stock and a good attendance of buyers. There was a keen demand for store sheep at advanced rates. Fat lambs showed a rise of fully 1s per head, and the fat sheep opened at firmer rates, but eased off as it proceeded. Fat cattle sold at about previous week's rates for ordinary sorts and extra prime sold rather better. Fat pigs were a shade easier. Extra prime wethers made up to 36s; prime, 21s 6d to 27s; lighter, 17s to 21s; extra prime ewes, to 25s 7d; prime, 19s to 24s; medium, 16s to 18s 6d; aged and light, 9s 8d to 15s 6d; merino wethers, 21s 6d. Steers sold at from £5 12s 6d to £11; extra prime, to £16; heifers, £6 5s to £10; extra, to £14 7s 6d; and cows, £6 to £10. Choppers made £3 10s to £6 9s; heavy baconers, 68s to 75s; and lighter, 52s to 60s—equal to 5½d to 5¾d per lb. Heavy porkers realised 44s to 48s; and lighter, 38s to 42s—equivalent to 6d to 6¼d per lb. Good stores realised 35s to 40s; medium sorts, 28s to 34s; and small sorts, 20s to 26s. Weaners brought 13s 6d to 18s, the latter price being obtained for extra good sorts.

At Burnside last week there were large yardings of fat sheep and lambs, but only moderate entries of fat cattle and pigs. The fat cattle penned totalled 170 head, consisting for the most part of medium quality bullocks and heifers. Butchers' stocks were light, and the previous week's prices were fully maintained. Prime bullocks sold at from £12 to £13 10s, extra to £14 17s 6d, medium £10 to £11 10s, light and inferior £7 10s to £9; good heifers £9 10s to £10 10s, extra to £11 12s 6d, medium £8 to £9, light and inferior £6 to £7 10s. The fat sheep forward totalled 3620, comprising, for the most part, medium-weight sheep, with a few pens good quality wethers and ewes. The sale opened with prices on a par with previous week's rates, but these receded from 1s to 1s 6d as the sale advanced. Best wethers brought from 22s to 25s, extra heavy to 37s; medium, 19s 6d to 20s 6d; light and inferior, 17s to 18s; best ewes, 19s to 21s; extra, to 25s; medium, 14s to 15s; inferior, 10s 6d to 12s. There was a large yarding of lambs, 4603 being penned. Exporters were operating freely, and prices were firm at late rates. Prime lambs brought from 19s 6d to 21s, extra to 25s, medium 16s to 17s 6d, light and inferior 12s to 13s 6d. There was an entry of 49 fat pigs. Bidding was brisk throughout the sale, and prices were much on a par with previous week's rates. Best baconers sold at from £3 to £3 15s, light baconers £2 10s to £3, porkers £2 to £2 10s.

THE DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

At the annual meeting of the National Dairy Association at Palmerston North the chairman (Mr. Martin) referred to the great progress made by the association during the past year. It was much larger than they had known for many seasons, and this was due principally to the big advance made in dairying in the Auckland province. Land that was considered as worthless only a few years ago was being brought into dairying, and he considered that it was only a matter of a short time before Auckland would beat Taranaki in exports. The development of dairying was most marked, and figures proved that the export trade had grown from £200,000 a few years ago to £4,309,000. He considered that in a few years' time dairying would outclass wool. Pastures and herds were being improved, and farmers generally were adopting better methods. It was in the interests of the dairy companies to get the farmers to take on the work of the testing associations.

CALVES FOR VEAL.

In raising calves for veal a certain quantity of milk is necessary, but the amount of milk that a calf will consume before it is ready to sell for veal seems to vary considerably. According to the following, some are inclined to underestimate the amount of milk needed. A well known authority gives the following information as the result of his experience:—'At the age of three days I commenced keeping a record of the amount of milk the calf drank. I started him with 16lb of milk per day, and gradually increased it according to his appetite until the fifth week, when he was consuming 30lb to 32lb daily. At the end of 35 days the calf was dressed, and the results were—Amount of milk consumed in 35 days, 960lb; dressed weight of calf, 127lb; received for same, 6d per lb. Figuring the calf's value at birth at 8s 6d, he made a gain on 960lb of 3½ per cent. milk; or, in other words, the calf paid us 1s 8½d per lb for butter fat. As the labor of milking the cow and feeding the milk to the calf was considerably less than would be required to separate the milk and deliver the cream at the factory, we figure that this calf paid very well.'

LOSS OF QUALITY IN FARMYARD MANURE.

Every farmer knows that a serious loss of valuable fertilising material, representing a large sum in £ s. d., occurs during the storage of farmyard manure (says *Farm, Field, and Fireside*). These losses occur from two causes:—

Fermentation—which means destruction of organic matter and dissipation of nitrogen—and leaching, whereby the stores of soluble plant food, both organic and mineral, are materially lessened by drainage.

The extent of the loss is found to be dependent upon the conditions of rotting the manure and the degree and the length of time in rotting. Undoubtedly, if manure cannot be put while fresh into the soil, the ideal arrangement is to keep it in a moist, compact pile, protected from rain.

Thus, in an open shed, mixed horse and cow manure lost during three months' exposure 60 per cent. of its total organic matter (humus-forming material), 30 per cent. of its total nitrogen, and 22 per cent. of its total potash, and 8 per cent. of its total phosphoric acid. Similar manure, but protected by being kept in a roofed shed, lost during the same period 50 per cent. of its total organic matter and 15 per cent. of its total nitrogen, the phosphoric acid and potash suffering no loss, as there was no leaching.

Though for certain specific purposes rotted manure has undoubtedly advantages over fresh manure, it must be pointed out that for general farm purposes the losses in rotting outweigh the benefits therefrom. The safest storehouse for manure is the soil, and we therefore unhesitatingly say that the farmer who gets his manure while still fresh into the soil returns to it for the future use of his crops much more plant food than if he allowed the manure to accumulate in piles.

The question is frequently asked: If manure spread upon the field dries before it is ploughed under, what loss, if any, is there of its nitrogen? Experiments conducted to ascertain information on this point showed conclusively that when manure is spread in thin layers and allowed to dry out, fermentation is rapidly arrested, and loss of ammonia is very small, and may be disregarded unless the manure is in a state of active fermentation when spread upon the field.