

On the Land

GENERAL.

Several cheese and butter factories in the Forty-mile Bush district are still running on alternate days.

A mature cow should produce at least 250lb of fat before she is worth keeping, and 300lb is not too much to require.

In Canada the average price for factory butter in 1900 was 10d per lb; in 1910 it had increased to 1s 1d per lb; and cheese in the same period had decreased from 5d per lb to 4½d per lb.

Volcanic soils, naturally rich in phosphoric acid, well supplied with potash and lime, produce pastures in which clovers and good grasses are abundant.

A hand-saw is a good thing, but not to shave with; just so a beef-cow is a good thing, but not to produce milk with.

A line of 2500 fat wethers from one of the stations in the Mangaweka district was disposed of the other day at 25s per head, the deal representing £3125. A pastoralist also sold 28 fat steers at £15 per head, representing £420.

The rotation of crops causes the development of greater numbers of organisms in the soil, and of greater ammonifying, nitrifying, and nitrogen-fixing power by the soil than continuous cropping either with cereals or with clover.

Agricultural co-operation in Germany made remarkable progress in 1912. There were no fewer than 1541 new agricultural co-operative societies founded and registered, bringing the total number of rural co-operative societies to 26,576, with a membership of 2,500,000. There were no fewer than 342 co-operative societies formed for the distribution of electrical energy.

Adelaide, a member of the shorthorn herd of the Ruakura Farm of Instruction, has finished her season with a record of 415 lb of butter-fat. In the previous season, which was two months longer, she gave 438lb. This season she was dried off while still yielding 100lb of milk weekly, as she was about to calve in a very short time. A two-year heifer in the herd has reached 300lb of butter-fat, and is still giving 100lb of milk weekly.

The increasing use of milking machines is bringing with it a necessity for greater care in their handling. The Minister of Agriculture in New South Wales says: 'The butter of the State is deteriorating in quality through the sheer carelessness of a number of suppliers in connection with the use of milking machines. These people permitted the rubber tubes to become contaminated through neglect to clean the machines regularly after each milking. If the rubber were kept clean no damage whatever could be done to the milk. This carelessness had become very serious, and two prosecutions had been instituted recently upon reports of the departmental inspectors.'

At Addington last week there were large entries of fat cattle and sheep, and moderate yardings in other departments. Fat cattle, though entered in large numbers, sold well. The few fat lambs penned brought late rates. Store sheep were in active demand. Fat sheep showed an advance, and there was no change in fat pigs. Only 1024 fat lambs were penned. Best lambs made 16s 6d to 20s 9d; others, 14s 8d to 16s. There was a large yarding of fat sheep, totalling between 6000 and 7000. Extra prime wethers made to 30s; prime, 22s 6d to 27s 6d; lighter, 19s 1d to 22s; merino wethers, 15s to 20s; prime ewes, 19s to 25s; others, 15s 6d to 18s 6d. Fat cattle: Steers realised £9 10s to £11 5s; extra, to £17 10s; heifers, £6 17s 6d to £9; extra, to £14; cows, £5 17s 6d to £10 7s 6d. Store pigs: Large sorts made £1 8s to £2 1s 6d; medium, £1 8s to £1 17s; small sorts, £1 2s to £1 7s. Weaners made 14s to £1 1s.

There were only small yardings of fat sheep and fat cattle at Burnside last week, and consequently there was keen competition in both cases. The price of lambs was on a par with that of the previous week, whilst fat pigs were eagerly competed for. The fat cattle forward totalled 126. The small yarding sold under keen competition at prices about 15s to 20s in advance

of previous week's rates: Best bullocks, £12 to £14; extra heavy to £16; others, £10 to £11 10s; best cows and heifers, £9 10s to £10 10s; extra to £12 10s; others £6 to £8. There was only an entry of 2179 fat sheep, consisting mainly of good quality wethers, with an odd pen of ewes. Butchers' stocks were light, consequently competition was keen throughout the sale; prices, compared with previous week, being 2s per head better. Prime wethers, 25s 6d to 28s; extra heavy, to 30s; medium wethers, 22s to 24s 6d; others, 19s to 20s 6d; prime ewes, 22s to 25s; extra heavy, to 31s. The lambs forward totalled 400. There was the usual number of export buyers operating, but bidding was indifferent, and there was no appreciable change in prices to report. Prime lambs, 17s to 18s 9d; extra, to 19s 6d; medium lambs, 15s to 16s 6d; unfinished, to 14s 6d. There was a small entry of pigs—47 fats and 33 stores. A total clearance was effected at extreme rates: Choppers, up to £5; best baconers, up to £4 15s; medium baconers, £2 15s to £3 15s; porkers, £2 5s to £2 12s 6d; slips, to 36s.

THE RUAKURA POTATO CROP.

The work of lifting and weighing the numerous varieties of potatoes being tested at the Ruakura Farm of Instruction occupied twelve days (writes Mr. A. W. Green in the *Journal of Agriculture*). The crop as a whole was good, heavy in weight, free from blight and scab, and the tubers were sound. The only fault was that the average size of the potatoes was rather small. The late varieties, in most cases, gave these small tubers, no doubt due to a great extent to drought. In some cases, however, the variety was to blame, for under the most favorable conditions it would yield a high percentage of small tubers. Northern Star and Gamekeeper are two such varieties. They are also inclined to form second growth, producing secondary small tubers. Gamekeeper is a variety that has lately been well advertised as a heavy cropper and a good commercial variety, but present and past experiments at this farm go to prove that it is not worth growing. From six rows, each 4½ chains in length, the total crop gathered was five bags of eating and seed and seven bags of big potatoes. For comparison with a standard variety, six rows of Up-to-date, each 4½ chains in length, produced fifteen bags of eating and seed potatoes and two bags and a half of big potatoes. Each bag weighed 184lb.

DRESSING THE LAND.

It is very doubtful if a dressing of lime, salt, soot, etc., will have as much effect as some people suppose in killing disease germs in pasture (says Professor Penberthy). A dressing that would be sufficient to kill organisms in the soil of a disease nature, would also be liable to kill the crop that grows on the surface. In the case of the fluke snail, a dressing of salt—10cwt to the acre—might certainly have some effect, and in illustration of this, there is the fact that the salt marsh land round the sea coast is practically free from this pest. On the other hand, lime and soot act as manure, and help the growth of the grass, even if they do not get at any disease in the soil. Professor Penberthy advocates ploughing up and cultivating the land, as it gives the germs time to die before they can perpetuate their species in the live stock. Unfortunately it is not possible to plough up old pastures, and therefore some other method must be found. Alternate grazing and cutting would have this effect, as it would give a field a rest for a twelvemonth, as it were, and thus allow the pests to die out. Certain it is that a good deal of the disease which attacks our animals is due to the infection which they have caught from the soil below them.

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