

On the Land

MARKET REPORTS.

There was a medium yarding of fat cattle at Burnside last week, 312 head being penned. The quality of the bullocks offered was medium, but a proportion of the cow and heifer beef was poor. Prime beef sold up to 40s per 100lb, medium 35s to 37s 6d, light and unfinished 30s to 33s 6d. Values were: Extra prime bullocks to £21 2s 6d, prime £15 to £18, medium £12 10s to £14 10s, lighter £10 to £12, extra prime heifers and cows to £12 7s 6d, prime £8 to £11, others £5 1s to £7 10s. Fat Sheep.—There was a medium entry, 1665 being yarded. The quality generally was good, and values were quite on a par with prices ruling at the previous market.—Freezing buyers operated freely, securing a proportion of the lighter wethers and ewes, and this competition kept the market firm. Values were: Extra prime wethers 51s 6d to 55s 3d, prime 46s to 50s, medium 41s to 45s, light 37s to 40s 6d, extra prime woolly ewes to 54s, extra prime shorn ewes 45s to 49s 9d, prime 40s to 44s, medium 35s to 39s, light 28s to 34s. Lambs.—There was a small yarding, 873 being forward. Freezing buyers operated freely, and prime lambs sold at well up to late rates. Lighter sorts, however, did not meet such a keen sale and values for this quality eased quite 2s per head. Extra prime lambs made 45s to 48s, prime 40s to 44s, medium 35s to 39s, light 30s to 34s. Pigs.—There was a good demand at the opening of the sale for both porkers and baconers, and prices were up 5s per head. There were 180 fat pigs and 55 stores.

The first market after the holidays was held at Addington on the 7th inst., and attracted average entries. There was an improved market for fat cattle, whilst fat lambs showed an advance on the exporters' buying schedule. Fat and store sheep maintained late rates. Fat Lambs.—The yarding consisted of 3060 head. There was a keen sale. Prime under 42s made from 12½d to 12½d, seconds 12d, and heavyweights 11½d, extra prime lambs 45s to 47s 10d, prime 41s 6d to 44s 6d, medium 37s 6d to 41s, light 32s 6d to 37s. Fat Sheep.—An average yarding and a good sale, though values were slightly over exporters' limits. The market eased towards the finish of the sale. Extra prime wethers 47s to 49s, prime 44s to 46s 6d, medium 39s 6d to 43s, light 35s to 39s, extra prime ewes 43s to 47s 3d, prime 37s 6d to 40s, medium 34s to 37s, light 30s to 33s 6d, old and inferior 26s 6d to 29s. Fat Cattle.—400 were yarded, mostly of good class. There was an improved sale by 25s to 30s a head. Extra choice beef made to 43s per 100lb, prime 38s 6d to 41s 6d, medium 35s to 38s 1d, and light from 31s to 34s 6d, extra prime steers £19 to £20 10s, prime £16 to £18 10s, medium £13 5s to £15 15s, light £9 to £13, prime heifers £9 15s to £10 17s 6d, medium £7 to £9 10s, extra prime cows £13 2s 6d, prime £9 5s to £11 10s, medium £7 to £9, old £3 to £6 5s. Vealers.—A good sale. Runners made to £7 2s 6d, vealers £3 10s to £6. Fat Pigs.—A big entry, and baconers

were a little firmer. Choppers made up to £5 and best baconers to £4 6s (average price per lb 6d to 6½d); porkers £2 7s to £3 6d (average price per lb 6½d to 7d).

VERY POOR LANDS.

To get poor lands, either pastures or meadows into condition, an application of a big dressing of basic slag, 10cwt per acre, has been found effective. It stimulates the growth of clover, which is the basis of improvement. Potash may also be necessary in some cases. Farmers should try a strip of the land with slag alone and with slag and potash. Watch the result, and the following season be guided thereby.

BASIC SLAG AND GRASS LANDS.

Basic slag has placed at the disposal of farmers a valuable means of improving grass lands, especially pastures. If the herbage is of poor quality, the slag will enrich it; if already in fair condition, the slag will increase its feeding quality.

For hay lands, superphosphate can also be used with great advantage, and when the fields have not received for a year or two a dressing of farmyard manure, the application of a little nitrogenous fertiliser or rich Peruvian guano is of great benefit.

"BROWN ROT" OF APPLES.

Conditions this year have been very favorable to the spread of brown rot of apples. (says a writer in a Home paper for October, 1924). The rot causes the dying-back of shoots, and in the spring the withering of blossoms. It is often put down to damage by frost, but this is not the cause. The main source of infection from this disease is the mummified fruit which is allowed to remain on the trees all the winter. In the spring these become centres of disease from which spores of the fungus are blown on to shoots and blossoms and give rise to fresh centres of infection.

The most effective preventive measure is the removal and destruction of all mummified fruit; these should be collected and either burned or deeply buried. In gardens and small orchards it is possible to go over the trees at intervals during the season and remove all fruit showing the slightest signs of brown rot.

In large orchards such a course is not always practicable, but every effort should be made to remove diseased fruit as early as possible. In addition, any infected spurs, together with cankers on the stem, should be cut out. This operation is best performed in summer when the dead or dying spurs are conspicuous, but it may be carried out later provided it is completed before the fungus resumes its growth in spring.

When fruit is to be stored the greatest care should be exercised in discarding all fruit showing signs of brown rot, for the disease will not only continue to develop in the affected apples, but will spread to others.

PHOSPHATE OF LIME ESSENTIAL.

When it is considered that practically every product that goes off a farm carries with it a certain amount of phosphoric acid, it is not difficult to understand that sooner or later impoverishment of that important constituent is bound to take place, unless the outgoing amount is replaced by some means. A farmer may think that if he applies farmyard manure periodically it will suffice to restore the balance, because farmyard manure is first seriously deficient in that one constituent.

The Drain of Phosphoric Acid.

The sources of loss are mainly in the bones of all animals, especially young animals, bred in the farm in the grain crops sold off the farm, and a heavy loss occurs in the milk; a herd of milking cows constitutes a heavy drain; it is estimated that the annual yield of milk from one cow is not less than 10 to 12 pounds of phosphoric acid. A small proportion is also lost by drainage, but this is not important.

A French scientist who made a special study of the subject estimated that in the entire French crops grown in one year there was approximately 300,000 tons of phosphoric acid, and in the bones of the farm animals no less than 76,820 tons of the ingredient, whereas in the quantity of farmyard manure returned to the soil there were only about 157,000 tons, leaving a deficit of about 150,000 tons to be made good, equal to more than 330,000 tons of phosphate of lime.

Making Good the Loss.

Most soils contain a natural stock of the ingredient in an insoluble condition, and year by year a small, but very small, proportion becomes available by the process of the soil "weathering," but not in any sufficient quantity to be taken into consideration. A larger source exists in farmyard manure, but still a quantity quite insufficient to satisfy the demand; a ton of the manure contains only about 5lb of phosphoric acid, and even this is often reduced by neglectful treatment of the manure.

Fortunately the discovery some 60 years ago of the big deposits of phosphatic material, which in the form of superphosphate have placed in farmers' hands an effective means of checking the loss, and at the same period the importation of enormous quantities of Peruvian guano, rich in phosphoric acid, as well as nitrogen, was a great help, while more recently the discovery of the value of basic slag and of raw phosphate, very finely ground, have removed the danger of phosphoric acid starvation.

There is, however, no doubt that far larger quantities could be applied with advantage to the crops, especially to the grass lands of the country. This is a point to which farmers should give attention; much of the pasture land could be nearly doubled in value, and the average yield of the hay lands raised by 25 per cent.

Phosphates in all the commercial forms are now obtainable at such a moderate price that farmers should not be deterred by the outlay from making use of them.

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