

On the Land

MARKET REPORTS.

At Burnside last week 292 head of fat cattle were yarded. This entry was made up of medium to good bullocks, while a fair proportion of the yarding consisted of heifers and cows. The number of prime heavy bullocks was not very big. The market opened at prices a shade easier for heavy cattle, while medium cattle sold much on a par with those of the previous week. Extra prime bullocks brought to £19 5s, prime from £15 10s to £17 10s, medium bullocks from £12 to £15, light from £10 to £11 15s. Extra prime cows and heifers made £10 to £12, medium £6 10s to £8, old and inferior £4 to £5 10s. Fat Sheep.—There was a large yarding of fat sheep forward, 2439 in all being offered. All the yarding consisted of shorn sheep, and comprised grades of all descriptions, the proportion of prime wethers being fully up to the average, while the balance of the yarding consisted of medium wethers and good to indifferent ewes. The above number proved to be in excess of requirements, and the sale opened with a drop of from 3s to 4s on heavy-weight wethers, while ewes suffered to much the same extent, and medium wethers were about 1s per head easier than of late. Prime wethers made 45s to 51s, medium 38s to 42s, light 32s to 37s 6d, prime ewes 35s to 40s, medium 30s to 32s 6d, old and inferior 23s to 28s. Fat Lambs.—A small yarding, 624 being offered. Exporters were the principal operators, and prices were on a par with preceding week's rates. Prime lambs brought from 45s to 52s 6d, medium from 35s to 39s, light and unfinished 28s to 33s. Fat Pigs.—There was a large yarding of fat pigs, principally porkers. Baconers realised values on a par with those of the previous week, while porkers showed a drop of from 5s to 7s 6d per head. Store pigs were slightly easier.

Entries last week at Addington were in most sections smaller than usual. There was a particularly good sale, with a hardening in prices in all the major classes of stock. Fat Lambs.—There was a small yarding of 2360 head and a good firm sale at values of 12½d to 12½d for prime under 42's, 12d for light-weights, and 11½d for heavy-weights, extra prime 46s to 51s 6d, prime 41s 6d to 44s 6d, medium 37s to 41s, light 32s to 36s. Fat Sheep.—A small yarding and values advanced on the preceding week's rates. Exporters were unable to buy much at the values. Extra prime wethers 47s 6d to 49s 4d, prime 44s to 47s, medium 40s to 43s 6d, light 36s 6d to 39s 6d, extra prime ewes 40s to 46s 3d, prime 35s 6d to 38s 6d, light 31s 6d to 34s 6d, aged 27s 6d to 31s. Fat Cattle.—A heavy yarding of 460 head. There was an improved sale by 1s 6d per 100lb for extra choice. Best made to 46s per 100lb, prime 40s to 43s 6d, medium quality 37s to 39s 6d, light 33s 6d to 36s 6d, rough down to 25s, extra prime steers to £20 7s 6d, prime £16 15s to £19, medium £13 10s to £16 10s, light £9 10s to £13, rough £7 7s 6d to £9 7s 6d, extra prime heifers to £16, prime £10 to £12 10s, ordinary £6 10s to £9 15s, extra prime cows £13 5s, prime £9 15s to £11 15s, ordinary £6 15s to £9 5s, aged £3 10s to £6 10s.

Vealers met with a good sale. Runners to £6 10s, good vealers £3 10s to £5 10s, good calves £2 to £3, small 15s to 32s 6d. Fat Pigs.—There was a small yarding of baconers and a sharp rise. Choppers 50s to £5, light porkers 48s to 55s, heavy 57s 6d to £3 5s. Average price per lb 7d to 8½d. Light baconers £3 12s to £4, heavy £4 5s to £4 15s. Average price per lb 6d to 7½d.

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LIQUID MANURE.

During the spring and summer growing seasons the need for plentiful nitrogenous manuring is always felt, especially on farms (says an exchange) where green crops are extensively grown. We are well provided in this country with quick-acting nitrogenous manures, which are easily obtainable in all parts; but there is a most valuable supplement to them which too often is allowed to run to waste. We refer, of course, to the liquid manure which is produced on the farm, and which, as often as not, is most abundant on farms where green crops are grown particularly in the case of dairy holdings. Where no storage tank for the liquid manure is available, it would prove a paying investment in nearly every case to build one, for this is one of those instances in which a moderate expenditure in capital would result in a direct and immediate economy. In most districts an effective tank can be cheaply constructed of concrete; and we can only say that the initial outlay incurred would very quickly be paid for by the extra crops which would result from the valuable fertilising material saved.

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WORN-OUT PASTURES.

For pastures that have been long neglected, and as a consequence have become impoverished, incapable of producing anything but a crop with plenty of weeds and no nourishing herbage, the treatment which has been found to give the best results is to apply liberal dressings of mineral fertilisers in the cheap forms of superphosphate or basic slag, or even raw phosphate very finely ground, and potash salt, such as kainit or sylvinit.

The phosphates and potash are not liable to be washed out of the ground, and an improvement in the nature of the herbage will soon be apparent. In the following year the treatment can be modified by giving the field the benefit of an application of mixed fertilisers containing a little nitrogen. A dressing of farmyard manure is also always useful in such cases.

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MANURIAL VALUE OF CLOVER.

The increased cultivation of clover and lucerne, especially of the latter, is being recommended on the two grounds, that these crops provide valuable fodder, and that they leave in the soil a residue containing nitrogen collected from the atmosphere which supplies stimulating nourishment for the following crop, and by so doing enables the grower to dispense with the application of a dressing of a costly nitrogenous fertiliser.

The amount of nitrogen thus added to the soil by the roots of the legume crop is esti-

mated to be at least 50lb per acre, equivalent to a dressing of 3 to 4cwt of nitrate of soda.

And apart from the benefit of the grain in nitrogen, there are other advantages arising from the minerals brought nearer to the surface from the lower levels to which the long roots of the legumes have penetrated; moreover, during the autumn months a clover crop in possession of the ground helps to retain in the soil plant food which might otherwise be washed away by the winter rains.

It would appear, therefore, to be sound advice that farmers, who have suitable soil, should turn their attention to an extension of the crop.

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BONES AND BONE MANURES.

Bone meal, crushed bone, and bone dust have been used by farmers in many countries for more than a century as a means of maintaining the soil in a fertile condition. It is said that the Chinese knew the value of bones for the purpose before civilisation began in Europe. Old records show that Chinese farmers and fruit growers applied calcined bones to their fields 2000 years ago.

At the present time raw bone meal, unless very finely ground, is considered too slow in action for modern methods, but bone manures—that is, bones treated with acid—are much in favor as fertilisers for root crop and grass lands, supplying phosphate of lime and nitrogen derived from organic sources and in a readily available condition.

Steamed bone flour is a product which during recent years has, deservedly, attracted much attention. Being very finely ground, it is quick in action, and contains a high percentage of phosphate of lime, about 60 per cent., combined with about 1 per cent. of organic nitrogen. It can be applied alone and serves admirably for mixing with other fertilisers, such as potash salts, phosphatic manures, etc.

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SOIL ACIDITY AND ITS CURE.

Soil acidity is one of the chief causes of poor crops; it is injurious to almost all cultivated crops, though not in the same degree. The oat plant, for instance, is able to put up with a sour soil, whereas it is deadly to clovers and with the turnip crop is productive of the well-known disease, "finger and toe." The principal cause of the pernicious condition in the soil is due to—

Absence of drainage, giving rise to a water-logged condition of soil; too much organic matter leading to the production of acidity.

The remedy is obvious; it is—

Drainage if the land is water-logged and the application of lime in one form or another. Lime is the sovereign remedy. It is well called "a soil sweetener." It neutralises sourness and prevents the formation of noxious compounds; it checks fungoid diseases, and when applied to pasture land promotes the growth of the more nutritious herbage; but it should be borne in mind that lime is not in proper sense a fertiliser; it contains no nitrogen, no phosphoric acid, and no potash, and therefore it is incumbent after a dressing of lime to apply a dressing of suitable plant nourishment.

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