

ON THE LAND

MARKET REPORTS.

At Burnside last week 171 head of fat cattle were yarded. A medium yarding, and the sale opened at a slight advance on the previous week's prices, but as it progressed prices fell away considerably and a number of pens were passed out unsold. Extra prime bullocks, to £21 12s 6d, prime £16 10s to £18, medium £12 to £15, light £8 to £11, cows and heifers, prime heavy £10 to £12, medium £8 to £10, lighter £5 to £7. Fat Sheep.—3604 were penned, including a good proportion of prime quality wethers and ewes, a good number of medium quality sheep, with a sprinkling of old ewes and unfinished wethers. The sale opened at about the preceding week's prices, and although some parts of the sale were a shade better towards the end prices receded somewhat. Prime wethers realised from 23s 6d to 28s, light and unfinished from 15s, extra prime heavy ewes to 23s, prime heavy 17s 6d to 21s, medium 14s to 21s, light and aged from 10s. Fat Lambs.—1805 penned. A full yarding, with prices for freezing lambs about on a par with those ruling on the previous week. For lambs unsuitable for freezing there was little demand, and prices were considerably easier. Exporters were buying at about 6½d per lb. Quotations: Prime lambs from 21s to 25s 6d, medium 15s to 18s, light 13s to 15s 6d, unfinished lambs up to 12s. Fat Pigs.—There was a full yarding, with prices about the same as the preceding week's. Porkers sold at £2 5s to £3 5s, light baconers £3 15s to £5, heavy baconers £3 to £5 10s, choppers £4 10s to £5, suckers 10s to 15s, slips 15s to 25s, stores 30s to £2.

At Addington market last week there was an overflow yarding of fat sheep, and a big one of fat cattle. Prices eased in both sections. Fat Sheep.—An overflow yarding. The market was irregular, but values were down on an average of 2s to 2s 6d per head. Extra prime wethers 26s 9d to 32s 9d, prime 18s 6d to 25s 6d, medium 16s 3d to 18s 3d, light and unfinished 14s 9d to 16s, extra prime ewes up to 33s, prime 16s 9d to 21s 6d, medium 14s to 16s 3d light and unfinished 11s 5d to 13s 6d, prime hoggets up to 24s, medium to good 16s 6d to 19s, ordinary 14s 1d to 16s 3d. Fat Cattle.—A big yarding of medium to good quality. Values were down about 20s a head compared with those of the previous week. Extra prime steers £23 to £26, prime £14 to £19, medium £10 5s to £18 5s, light and unfinished £7 17s 6d to £9 15s, extra prime heifers £13 10s to £15 10s, prime £9 15s to £11 12s 6d, ordinary £6 10s to £9 10s, extra prime cows up to £13 10s, prime £8 10s to £11 2s 6d, ordinary £5 15s to £7 17s 6d. Fat Pigs.—Current values were maintained. Choppers £5 to £14, light baconers £5 to £5 15s, heavy £6 to £7 15s—average price per lb 8½d; light porkers £3 10s to £4, heavy £4 5s to £4 15s—average price per lb 9½d to 10½d.

ARTIFICIAL FERTILISERS.

The system of drilling artificial fertilisers with crops of all sorts is now almost universal (writes "Rusticus," in the *Lyttelton Times*). Even on the good lands some manure is put in. In the early days we could grow wheat and all other crops without the application of manures, but those days are past. One has only to leave a width of the drill through a paddock without the manure box in action to demonstrate the wisdom of putting in fertilisers. The price of artificial manures has dropped a little of late, much to the relief of those who are going in for cropping. But if they had not declined in price they would still have to be used if a payable crop was expected. In Canterbury, supers are the favorite manures, and they will still continue to hold that position. When the Nauru Island manures come to hand they will be welcome, and the sooner they arrive the better. Of late years we have not been able to get the best supers, and when they came to hand a short time ago the price was almost prohibitive. Some of us got over that difficulty to some extent by mixing them with cheaper manures, and the results warranted the extra expenditure. Superphosphates may add to the acidity of the soil, but we go on using them. Perhaps some of the diseases that we get in our crops may be due to the over-use of this manure, but there is nothing else to take its

place so far. The only remedy appears to be in the application of lime, and farmers are going in for this more extensively than they formerly did. Basic super, which contains about 15 per cent. of lime, is being used a good deal, and in some districts it has given distinctly good results. It is a good manure to use in the autumn and winter. There is then plenty of time for the manure to become available for the plants. In the spring something more soluble is required, and this is the advantage possessed by the pure super. At the same time, it does not seem wise to use nothing but super unless some liming is done. Much of our land is sour enough naturally, and the super only makes matters worse. The ideal way is to lime and then to use supers, but basic super is a considerable help. As for the nitrogenous manures, these do not seem to be essential. We can usually grow the straw. It is the grain that we are mostly concerned with, and there can be no doubt that super has a beneficial effect upon it. Super makes the plants come away more quickly than they would otherwise do. It has the effect of causing the plants to tiller, and it brings on the harvest sooner than would otherwise be the case. This is an important point, particularly in late districts. Where sheep are grazed and where they are fattened on roots and rape, a good deal of nitrogenous manure is added to the soil, as is also the case where clovers and the like are grown. But more lime will have to be used in the future than in the past if the land is to be kept as sweet as it should be.

SPRING TREATMENT OF HEAVY SOILS.

Heavy—especially clay—soils which have been roughly ploughed or ridged for winter should receive the most careful treatment in the spring (says a writer in *Farm, Field, and Fireside*). A second ploughing will probably be necessary, and it is this that will cause irreparable damage if not done very carefully. The undersoil, for one thing, must not on any account be brought to the surface, for this, it will be obvious, has not come under the influence of the weather, and is therefore of quite a different consistency to the upper soil. Mixed with the latter, the subsoil will effectively prevent the formation of that fine tilth which is so necessary to seed-sowing.

Upon the seed-bed naturally depends everything that goes to ensure good crops. A good start means a good finish, or at least a finish in which the loss of a bad season is greatly minimised, and probably obviated. Anything, therefore, that tends to the detriment of the seed-bed threatens seriously the forthcoming crops.

The land should not be tilled when in a bad condition. If very wet it will be trodden or beaten into a mass, which will thereafter defy passable disintegration. When the surface is not dry enough to bear horses or machinery with safety it should be left untouched. All the ploughing and harrowing in the world will not undo the damage which the neglect of such precaution will bring about.

On heavy soils the proper procedure—if, of course, the land has been autumn-ploughed—is to put the drag or cultivator over it as soon as the weather allows of the operation, which will hasten the drying process by breaking up and opening the clods. Something of the sort should certainly be done before attempting to plough or to make up the seed-bed; shallow ploughing could then be undertaken with safety.

It is far better, however, to dispense with the plough at spring-time on heavy land already broken up; it is preferable to rely upon the cultivator only, for then is ensured that fineness of tilth which is so necessary to seed-sowing, and there is no danger of stodgy, unweathered subsoil being detrimentally mixed with the more friable medium.

IMPROVING CONDITIONS.

A distinct improvement in the economic situation—as applied to Farm Implements, is at last indicated by the substantial reduction in prices recently put into effect by that well-known firm, BOOTH, MACDONALD & CO. LTD., whose line of Carlyle Farm Implements has established itself throughout the Dominion as one of the factors essential to success in N.Z. farming methods. Catalogue and latest price list will be posted on application, and the firm will be obliged if this paper is mentioned when enquiry is made.