

ON THE LAND

MARKET REPORTS.

At Burnside last week there was a full yarding of 257 head of fat cattle, including a good proportion of prime quality. The supply was in excess of requirements, and the sale opened at a decline of from 30s to 40s per head on the previous sale's rates, this basis being maintained throughout. Quotations: Extra prime bullocks to £17 2s 6d, prime £13 to £15, medium £10 to £12 10s, light £7 to £9, prime cows £7 to £10, medium £5 10s to £6 10s, light and unfinished £4 to £5. Fat Sheep.—1744 head were yarded. This was the smallest yarding for some weeks, and at the commencement of the sale prices for prime heavy wethers were 2s and light wethers 1s above the preceding week's rates. As the sale progressed prime heavy sheep showed a further advance, but these prices were not maintained, and the sale finished very little better than the previous one. Quotations: Prime heavy wethers 23s to 27s, extra to 30s, prime wethers 20s to 22s, medium 17s to 19s, light and unfinished 15s to 16s 6d, prime ewes 18s to 20s 6d, medium 16s to 17s, light 13s to 15s. Spring Lambs.—A total of 63 head was offered. These were of a mixed quality. On account of the larger supply prices were somewhat easier. The yarding was disposed of at values ranging from 16s 6d to 32s per head. Pigs.—A medium yarding, all classes being represented. There was a fair demand for porkers and baconers at the preceding week's rates. Small pigs and slips were keenly competed for, and sold at relatively higher values than the rates ruling for fats. Best baconers realised from 8d to 8½d per lb, and best porkers from 8½d to 9d per lb.

At Addington market last week there were average yardings of all classes of stock except beef, which had an over-supply. Spring lambs.—Only 185 were penned, compared with 300 on the previous week. The entry was composed mostly of well-grown stock, and sold up to 34s. Practically all brought from 25s to 30s. Fat Sheep.—A slightly larger yarding than the preceding week's. The demand was firm throughout, a slight advance taking place. Extra prime wethers brought 28s 6d to 31s, prime 24s to 28s, medium 20s 6d to 23s 9d, light and unfinished 17s 3d to 20s, extra prime ewes to 25s 4d, prime 19s 9d to 24s, medium 17s 6d to 19s 6d, light and unfinished 15s 9d to 17s 3d, prime hoggets 19s to 22s 6d, ordinary 12s 6d to 18s 9d. Fat Cattle.—An over-supply, comprising 320 head. Prices further eased by about 20s to 25s per head. Prime beef was selling at about 34s to 36s per cwt. Prime steers £13 5s to £16 15s, medium £10 to £13, light and unfinished £6 10s to £9 17s 6d, extra prime heifers £13 5s to £14, prime £8 15s to £11 7s 6d, light and unfinished £7 2s 6d to £8 12s 6d, extra prime cows £13 7s 6d, prime £7 15s to £9 15s, ordinary £5 to £7 10s. Vealers.—Runners to £4 15s, good vealers £3 5s to £3 17s 6d, medium £2 to £3, small calves 5s to £1 10s. Fat Pigs.—A fair demand. Choppers £3 to £5, light baconers £4 5s to £4 15s, heavy £5 to £5 15s—average price per lb 7½d, light porkers £2 15s to £3 10s, heavy £3 15s to £4—average price per lb 9½d to 10d.

Messrs. Donald Reid and Co. report as follows on the fortnightly sale of rabbitskins, etc., held on last Monday: Medium-sized catalogues were disposed of at fairly satisfactory prices. Early and incoming sorts were much easier, winters were practically unchanged, super does being the only class to show any improvement. Quotations: Runners and suckers 1½d to 3d; racks—light 8d to 13½d, prime 14½d to 16½d, summers 6d to 13½d; autumns—early 27½d to 36d, late 28½d to 41½d, incoming 44½d to 46d; early winters—bucks 44d to 48½d, does 42d to 48½d; winter bucks—first 59½d to 69d, super 69d to 76d; winter does—first 68d to 85½d, super 86d to 95½d, spotted winters 32½d to 41½d, springs 16½d to 24½d; blacks—second winters 47d to 72d, first winters to 97d; milky 6d to 14½d; hareskins 9d to 21½d; horsehair 15½d to 17d.

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PHOSPHATIC MANURES: THE VALUE OF SOLUBILITY.

It would be considered stupid to invest money with no promise of interest and the possibility of loss. This is

really the risk taken when insoluble phosphatic fertilisers are applied to unsuitable soils. Before the war the two main phosphatic manures were superphosphate and basic slag—the former containing its phosphate of lime entirely soluble in water, and the latter in varying degrees of solubility in weak citric acid, but insoluble in water.

Owing to the exigencies of the war and the great shortage of phosphate, the Ministry of Agriculture authorised the discontinuance of the citric solubility guarantee, formerly given to buyers of basic slag. The immediate result of this order was to place on the market a large quantity of low-grade slag, and even with regard to the higher grades the percentage of solubility is now not a matter of guarantee. Opinions differ as to whether the citric soluble standard for judging the value of phosphatic manures, especially slag and raw mineral phosphate, is reliable, but such a standard did certainly "separate the wool from the yarn."

In order to appreciate the respective values of soluble and insoluble phosphate as plant food, two established facts should be remembered. First, that phosphates rendered soluble in water are quickly distributed in the soil amongst the roots of the plant, and, secondly, that plant food derived from the soil is absorbed by the plant through the minute attachments of the feeding rootlets. There can be no doubt, therefore, that superphosphate, by reason of its solubility in water, is quickly available, and may be expected to benefit the crop to which it is applied, and give a quick return. It is quite different with regard to phosphate which is not soluble in water. If water does not dissolve the phosphate, then obviously the process is slower, and depends on the degree of acidity or "sourness" of the soil.

The standard by which a weak solution of citric acid is used as the method of determining the amount of phosphate likely to be available in acid soils is most useful, even if not exactly accurate. Phosphate of lime, which can only be guaranteed as "insoluble," may ultimately become available as plant food in very acid soils, but a profitable return, even under suitable conditions, can only be a matter of doubtful experiment, and is not a commercial proposition.

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LINSEED.

Linseed is a crop that cannot fail to make the strongest appeal to the progressive farmer; it has to be recognised that the demands of those times no longer permit the pastures of the country to remain the sole resource of the live stock of the Dominion (says a writer in the *Auckland Star*). The land prices have increased, possibly inordinately; these lands must be made use of to their utmost limit. The value of the live stock of the farm has kept pace with that of the land. There is with us the imperative call to maintain that stock in the highest efficiency; the means of securing that efficiency is correct feeding. Those who have the best interests of the men on the land at heart have unfortunately to admit that the sole reliance on the pasture fails to supply the greater demand that is now placed upon our live stock, and this very specially applies to milking cattle. The cow is selected and bred for greater production. We cannot, however, claim that the feeding of the animal has been in even reasonable proportion to the larger demand that is now made upon its bodily resources. Let us accept the position; the more productive cattle have to be nourished more generously. This means the use of concentrates, and the chief of all concentrates is undoubtedly, linseed oil cake. That such a system of feeding must come is undoubted. We can grow the linseed. It is for those all-sufficient reasons that this crop must assuredly take an important place on the farms of the Dominion. We have now the use of the oil cake very obviously before us. There is an assured market for the oil in New Zealand and in oversea countries. With this we have established the oil and cake mills of the New Zealand Cattle, Cake and Oil Company, at Auckland, already in work, where every pound of linseed that is produced will be purchased. Let our farmers support those mills with a greater acreage in linseed. The area in this crop last year was 5,046 acres, and of these acres, 5,011 were in Canterbury.



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