

# ON THE LAND

## MARKET REPORTS.

At Burnside last week a large gathering of 370 head of fat cattle was yarded, and a good proportion were heavy and well-finished bullocks and heifers. The market opened at the previous week's rates, but gradually firmed until, at the close, although the auctioneers were selling by artificial light, prices advanced fully £1 per head. Extra heavy prime bullocks brought to £16 10s, heavy prime, from £12 10s to £14, medium from £9 10s to £10 10s, light from £6 10s, extra prime heavy heifers to £8 10s, prime £5 10s to £7, medium £4 10s to £6, light and aged cows from £3. Fat Sheep.—The number of sheep penned was 5579, an exceptional yarding, especially after following a full market the week before; but as there is to be no sale during Winter Show Week the butchers had to buy a double supply to carry them over a fortnight, and although prices dropped considerably, the sale was steadier than was anticipated. Well finished, heavy ewes and wethers sold at prices almost equal to late rates, but medium and light-weight ewes and wethers were considerably easier, and unfinished sheep were back as much as 3s or 4s. A few extra prime heavy-weight wethers sold as high as 61s, other pens of extra good sheep from 44s to 58s, prime 35s to 42s, medium 30s to 32s, light and unfinished from 24s to 27s 6d, extra prime heavyweight ewes realised from 30s to 38s, prime 22s to 30s, medium 17s to 21s, light from 7s to 15s. Fat Lambs.—1223 were penned. Freezing buyers and butchers competed keenly for all pens that were fit to kill, and late prices were well maintained. Extra prime lambs realised to 35s 6d, prime from 28s to 32s, medium from 24s to 28s. Fat Pigs.—There was an over-supply of pigs, all classes being represented. Competition was fairly brisk, but prices were easier to the extent of fully 6s per head both for baconers and porkers. Prime baconers realised up to 6d, and prime porkers up to 6½d per lb.

At Addington market last week there was a sharp rise in the prices of fat lambs and sheep, and a slight recovery in beef prices. Store sheep also sold spiritedly. Fat Lambs.—1720 were penned, and an improved market by over a halfpenny per head, over all values being a full 9½d. Extra prime lambs 32s to 38s 9d, prime 29s 3d to 31s 9d, medium 26s to 29s, light and inferior 21s to 25s. Fat Sheep.—A smaller yarding and improved prices by from 2s 6d to 3s 6d per head. Extra prime wethers from 35s, prime 32s to 34s 9d, medium 29s 6d to 31s 9d, inferior 26s 6d to 29s, extra prime ewes to 32s 7d, prime 26s 6d to 30s, medium 22s 6d to 26s, light 18s 6d to 22s, old ewes 16s to 18s 3d. Fat Cattle.—A better sale, particularly for prime medium-sized beef. The best made up to 27s 6d per 100lb, good 23s to 26s, medium 21s to 22s 6d, light from 18s downwards. Extra prime bullocks to £13 10s, prime £9 to £12, medium £6 12s 6d to £8 15s 3d, light £4 5s to £6 10s, extra prime heifers £8 10s to £10 17s 6d, prime £5 5s to £8 5s, ordinary £3 5s to £5 2s 6d, extra prime cows to £8 5s, prime £4 15s to £7 5s, ordinary £3 5s to £4 10s, old to £3. Vealers.—Good vealers were a shade better. Runners £4 10s, ordinary vealers £3 to £3 15s, medium £1 5s to £2 5s, calves 3s to 15s. Fat Pigs.—A medium entry. Porkers sold at up to late rates, but baconers were weaker. Choppers £3 to £6 10s, light baconers £3 5s to £3 10s, heavy £3 15s to £4, extra heavy to £4 13s (average price per lb 5½d to 6d); light porkers £2 to £2 5s, heavy £2 10s to £3 (average price per lb 7½d to 8d).



## MANAGEMENT OF DUCKS.

An outstanding fact in connection with the possible prolificness of ducks of a good laying strain (says a Home journal), and one to which a great deal of attention has been drawn in the reports of laying tests for ducks, is the capability of many birds in respect to long-sustained sequences of production. Thus we read of individual ducks that lay as many as 200 eggs or so in as many days; but it must not be concluded that such continuity of production is maintained without very careful management, or

that the high average flock yields are attainable without a very thorough understanding of these birds and their requirements.

The first thing that it is desirable for the beginner in duck-keeping to realise is that ducks are very nervous birds, or what might be termed highly-strung. They are, therefore, very easily upset to the extent of interference with the normal egg yield. It is essential to bear this fact in mind, in respect both to housing arrangements and protection from disturbance during the daytime.

The wise and experienced manager of a duck-laying test subjects any casual visitor to very careful shepherding when the pens are under inspection—a practical hint worth noting.

This characteristic of duck nature inevitably suggests the advisability of entrusting the care of laying ducks to one person only, so far as this may be possible. The birds become accustomed to the regular attendant, who goes about the business of feeding and general management quietly and without unnecessary fuss—avoiding particularly any handling that is not absolutely essential. But the presence among the birds of strangers may easily upset them, and it need scarcely be added that dogs in their near neighborhood may seriously affect the egg yield. They must, moreover, be afforded adequate protection by night as well as against disturbing influences by day. Rats or other vermin may have a disastrous effect.

But, given ordinary peaceable surroundings, and the freedom of a good range, a good supply of eggs may be anticipated before the flock is released from the enclosure at from about 9.30 to 10 o'clock in the morning—provided that breed, strain and feeding are all suited to the purpose. Another fact that has been brought out by recent more exact observation of ducks is that, whilst they are subject to partial moults from more or less accidental causes, the annual moult is usually quickly over, the birds returning to production within a comparatively short time.

To this must be added the general good health of these birds and their relative freedom from disease.

Although it is the common experience that ducks seem to be generally less susceptible to disease than is the ordinary domestic fowl, it will not do to presume too much in this connection. It only needs a moment's reflection to make it apparent that ducks hitherto have not been subjected to such influences as have led to degeneracy in some of our strains of domestic laying fowls. It may be inferred, therefore, that unless great care is exercised in the selection and breeding of ducks to establish laying strains, and in their management generally, this boasted freedom from disease may soon pass into a tradition—so far as future duck-keepers are concerned.

With the lessons of experience so evident in the case of laying hens, duck-keepers have no excuse for loss of constitutional fitness in their birds. The economy of duck-keeping for egg production depends very largely upon the maintenance of hardiness in the stock. If this is lost, the disease-resisting powers (which at present would seem to be inherent in ducks) will be gone. Good management comprises many details—that goes without saying—but two things are essential to the immediate and future success of laying ducks. These are, first, the avoidance of disturbing influences; and, secondly, the resistance of any temptation to neglect the maintenance of hardiness.



I have never known, nor never expect to know, a lazy man who did not attribute all his misfortunes to bad luck. —Josh Billings.

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