

SURVEY OF SEASON

The killings of export-quality meat during the season totalled 315,468 tons net, being a decline of 6 per cent. on the previous year. From a fattening point of view the season was less favourable than any of the three preceding war years; this is reflected in lower average weights of lambs, wethers, and ewes, and in a greater percentage of second-quality meat.

Lamb killings at 10,970,041 carcasses showed a reduction of 79,731 carcasses on last season, and killings of pigs, sheep, and prime cattle all showed appreciable decreases. The entire exportable kill of ewes was again purchased by the Marketing Department on a carcass-weight basis, and the bulk of these ewes was boned out for canning purposes, but, as in the case of last season, an improvement in the shipping position enabled approximately 25 per cent. of the ewes killed to be shipped to the United Kingdom in frozen telescoped form. The Meat Pool Account has therefore again benefited to the extent of the increased return from ewes exported in frozen form, compared with their use for canning.

Last season's arrangement in regard to the purchase of boner cows was continued this season, the cows being purchased by the meat operators on the basis of 20s. per 100 lb. delivered at nearest port works. The operators sold the resultant boned meat to the canneries at a price fixed by consent of the Primary Industries Controller.

In regard to bull beef, instead of the subsidy payment of 6s. per 100 lb. dressed carcass-weight which operated last year, bull beef killed on and after the 1st December, 1942, was purchased outright by the Marketing Department at a price which enabled a payment to producers of 20s. per 100 lb. The bull beef was saved and for a short time was exported to the United Kingdom in frozen form, but subsequently it was reserved for dehydration.

The Government subsidy of 2s. per head on passed "bobby calves" was continued during the 1942-43 season. As mentioned in the last annual report, the improved shipping position has enabled bobby-calf meat to be saved for export since July, 1942. The proceeds of the sale of this bobby-calf meat were used in the first instance to recover the cost of the above-mentioned subsidy payment of 2s. per head, and the processing and freezing charges attendant upon the packing of this meat for export. By agreement between the Hon. the Minister of Marketing and the New Zealand Bobby Calf Pools Executive, out of the balance remaining in the Bobby Calf Pool Account a bonus of 1s. 9d. per head was paid to producers on all "passed" calves slaughtered during the twelve months ended 31st May, 1943. It was further agreed that, within the general framework of the Government's stabilization policy, similar arrangements would be made in respect of the twelve months ending 31st May, 1944.

The balance standing to the credit of the Bobby Calf Pool Account as at 31st July, 1943, is shown on page 32 of this report to be £91,782.

During the season shipping and storage space was again conserved to the maximum extent by telescoping, deboning, trimming, and packaging of export meat in accordance with standards established earlier in the war.

The Department wishes to record that at all times it has found the practical advice and co-operation of the associated freezing companies very helpful in adapting freezing-works practice to wartime conditions.

SHIPPING

During the earlier months of the killing season the amount of shipping space available was extremely limited, and as a result the storage position in some districts in the latter part of the season threatened to become very acute.

However, it was found possible to allocate shipping tonnage in such a way that no freezing-works had to cease killing owing to congestion of freezing-works' stores. Full use of the emergency cool-stores was made during this critical period.

From May onwards the liftings of meat were extremely satisfactory and, as already recorded, have resulted in a very small "carry-over" at the end of the season.

The Department again records its thanks to the Overseas Shipowners' Allotment Committee for its co-operation in arranging loadings, and to the New Zealand Railways Department for its continued assistance in organizing rail transport arrangements, especially in the direction of providing main port loadings of ships.

CANNED MEAT

The canning agreement with the United Kingdom Government for the 1942-43 season provided for purchases of the following quantities of canned meat for the production year ended 30th September, 1943:—

	Tons.						
Corned beef	..	..	..	..	..	..	12,000
Corned and boiled mutton	..	..	..	..	..	..	10,500
Canned brisket beef	..	..	..	..	..	..	200
Ox-tongues	..	..	..	..	..	..	400
Bobby-calf tongues	..	..	..	..	..	..	200
Sheep and lamb tongues	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,200
Pig-tongues	..	..	..	..	..	..	400

Canning contracts covering these quantities were allocated amongst the various canning companies in proportion to their production capacity.