

The dry season caused a falling off of dairy returns, and the result of the full season will be dependent on an early or late winter. The wet spring caused a great growth of grass, and large quantities of hay were well harvested.

So far as grain crops are concerned, the early harvest was well saved, but the broken weather in February and March has made the late harvest a difficult matter, and it is too early to say what the final results will be. Good crops of cocksfoot-seed have been reported from the Peninsula, but in South Canterbury and the foothill country heavy loss of grass-seed is to be expected owing to the continued wet weather in February and March. In view of the autumn rains, the prospects for the coming season are brighter.

OTAGO

(W. E. SHAW, Commissioner of Crown Lands)

Generally speaking, the year has been a favourable one. The winter set in early with some heavy snow in the high country, accompanied by heavy frosts, but except in a few cases the stock losses were not severe. The dry weather in the early summer was later followed by copious rains, which have been of great benefit from a feed point of view, although all this moisture cannot be said to have been favourable to cropping, and harvesting operations were hampered by the rain. Stock-prices have been satisfactory. On the high country the wool has not been up to the usual standard, too much moisture resulting in a short staple and yolk stain in numerous clips.

The orchardist has had a good season, in spite of apricots and nectarines suffering through excessive rains.

Shortage of labour has been a serious problem for farmers, especially in regard to agricultural work.

From the dairyman's point of view the year has been quite satisfactory.

Rabbits have again been plentiful and high prices have been realized for skins. Blocks for winter poisoning have been eagerly sought after, but in spite of this it is unlikely that the pest will be brought under control while the man-power position remains acute.

Sweetbriar and St. Johns wart are still the biggest problem of the noxious weeds, but serious attention to this matter will no doubt have to wait until the war is over.

The revenue position has been good and rent receipts have been very satisfactory.

SOUTHLAND

(T. CAGNEY, Commissioner of Crown Lands)

Following a good autumn, unusually prolonged winter conditions, associated with a long succession of heavy frosts, found many farmers inquiring for extra winter grazing, with the result that high prices were paid for turnips and other classes of grazing. A warm and unusually dry mid-season followed, and beneficial showers towards the end of the period saved the district from a serious shortage of grazing and gives promise of a good supply of fodder for the coming winter.

Generally, and no doubt as the result of the number of heavy frosts during the winter loosening up the ground, pastures came on well afterwards, and stock rapidly recovered from the lean winter and spring conditions. The long winter, however, resulted in a somewhat heavy mortality, particularly amongst old ewes, and to some extent detrimentally affected the wool-clip.

High-country runs were generally free of any damaging snowfalls, but lambing percentage will be probably lower than usual on account of the long winter. The close of the period found runs well provided with pasture and the outlook for winter feed good.

The season was not conducive to the best results being obtained from dairy-farms, and no doubt production from this source will show a decline, and this will be also aggravated by a tendency on the part of some dairy farmers to turn towards sheep-grazing.

The season has been a patchy one for croppers. Clover was affected by a late frost in January, after which a second growth occurred, and this will probably detrimentally affect the yield and quality of the seed. The fescue crop, although good on the heavy ground, was disappointing on the lighter country. An outstanding feature of the small-seed production was the large area of cocksfoot harvested and the excellent yields obtained. Oat crops were patchy and below the average. Wheat-harvesting was interfered with by the damp weather conditions.

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