

The average economic orchard unit is in the vicinity of 12 acres, but the size of such unit is dependent mainly on orchard-management practices and the fertility of the soil in which the trees are established.

PRODUCTION

The quantity of fruit produced in the Dominion during the 1945 season was :—

	Bushels.
Apples	2,280,224½
Pears	363,637½
Stone-fruit	557,615
Lemons	97,875
Other citrus	69,770

Apples and Pears.—The total production of apples and pears was distributed as follows :—

	Apples.	Pears.	Total.
	Bushels.	Bushels.	Bushels.
Distributed to consumers by Internal Marketing Division	1,868,106½	275,746½	2,143,853
Sold privately by growers	190,622	36,498½	227,120½
Sold to canning factories	140,997	51,038	192,035
Sold for dehydration, pulping, cider, &c.	80,499	354½	80,853½
Total	2,280,224½	363,637½	2,643,862

Owing to unseasonable weather conditions, the quantity of apples produced during 1945, although slightly in excess of the estimate, was appreciably less than that of the previous season.

The latest estimates for the 1946 season indicate a crop of 2,452,435 bushel cases of apples and 266,865 of pears.

Citrus Fruit.—Estimated totals for citrus production for the season 1945–46 are :—

	Bushels.
Lemons	97,875
New Zealand grapefruit	61,220
Sweet oranges	8,390

Growers of citrus fruits in the northern parts of the Dominion suffered financially when drought conditions extending for a period of four to five months were experienced toward the end of 1945 and till early in 1946. Considerable losses occurred in the orange and lemon crops by the fruit falling in the early stages of growth. The trees also suffered badly, and many growers in the Kerikeri area were put to considerable expense in either installing in their orchards a system of irrigation or by carting water and applying it to the soil about the trees in order to keep them alive.

Stone-fruit.—The quantity of stone-fruit produced shows a decided increase over last season. This was especially the case in Central Otago with regard to apricots. In Gisborne, however, drought conditions caused an appreciable loss of fruit.

The estimated production of stone fruits for 1945–46 is :—

	Bushels.
Peaches	303,300
Nectarines	28,500
Apricots	97,800
Plums	114,965
Cherries	13,050

There is still a good demand for stone-fruits for consumption as fresh fruit and for processing. This has had the effect of increasing the areas planted in stone-fruit in suitable districts.