

The large increase in 1943-44 in the area devoted to market gardens does not necessarily indicate a permanent development of market gardening. Large areas were at this period devoted to vegetable-production to supply Allied troops in the Pacific. Apart from this, however, there was a steady development of market gardening between 1919 and 1939. The linen-flax industry was essentially a wartime development, although the recent setting-up of the Linen Flax Corporation suggests that it will be a permanent feature of New Zealand's agriculture. Tobacco-growing has become of some importance, particularly since the cessation of imports of cigarettes and tobacco.

The above discussion has given some idea of the general structure of New Zealand agriculture with a view to examining the potential absorptive capacity of that industry. Before examining the population structure, however, it is proposed to discuss briefly the effects of the mechanization of agriculture which has proceeded rapidly over the past two decades.

The availability of machinery has had a very marked influence on the development of agriculture in the Dominion. The internal-combustion engine and electricity are, as direct influences on farming techniques, essentially developments of the period from 1920 onwards. The following table gives in summarized form the number of the various types of machines on farms from 1920 to 1942 :—

Table No. 77.—Table showing Number of various Types of Machines on Farms from 1920 to 1942

Year.	Milking-plants	Percentage of Cows in Milk Machine-Milked.	Cream-separators.	Shearing-machines.		Agri-cultural Tractors.	Rotary Hoes and Garden Tractors.	Electric Motors.	Internal-combustion Engines.	
				Plants.	Stands.					
1920	..	8,806	51.2	26,678	5,155	17,242	324	..	*	13,981
1921	..	10,450	53.4	32,024	5,354	17,618	380	..	456	15,685
1922	..	12,468	53.4	38,861	5,468	17,788	412	..	778	17,551
1923	..	13,553	55.2	40,916	5,317	17,394	439	..	1,339	18,207
1924	..	14,553	57.4	42,473	5,480	17,844	512	..	2,587	18,864
1925	..	15,561	59.8	44,656	5,728	18,445	1,026	..	3,451	19,894
1926	..	16,391	62.8	45,765	5,949	18,797	2,025	..	6,356	19,584
1927	..	17,090	64.9	45,246	6,305	19,269	2,588	..	8,436	18,885
1928	..	18,049	66.8	45,246	6,518	19,677	2,883	..	10,806	18,321
1929	..	18,756	68.9	45,781	6,887	20,329	3,377	..	13,377	18,489
1930	..	20,415	70.7	48,302	7,394	21,482	3,891	..	16,456	19,169
1931	..	22,547	74.1	47,112	8,191	23,140	5,023	..	22,520	22,136
1932	..	23,222	73.5	51,334	7,853	22,326	4,856	..	24,164	20,974
1933	..	24,350	73.2	54,200	7,936	22,562	4,972	..	26,757	21,667
1934	..	25,178	73.7	55,625	7,894	22,482	5,062	..	29,164	21,758
1935	..	25,630	75.2	55,920	8,174	22,982	5,349	..	31,631	22,117
1936	..	26,181	76.4	56,199	8,468	23,526	5,710	..	35,426	22,159
1937	..	27,331	78.6	56,850	8,867	24,229	6,585	..	40,201	22,358
1938	..	28,192	80.9	56,543	9,680	25,685	8,031	..	46,100	22,573
1939	..	28,970	82.8	55,665	10,664	26,063	9,639	..	51,344	22,601
1940	..	29,564	84.1	55,773	10,634	27,216	11,278	..	56,511	23,276
1941	..	30,878	86.2	54,896	10,916	27,550	12,516	757	61,826	23,644
1942	..	31,487	86.2	54,107	11,555	28,611	13,967	813	65,699	23,882

* Not available.

This table shows in unmistakable terms the extent of the mechanization of agriculture, particularly dairy-farming. To-day over 86 per cent. of the cows in milk are milked by machines. Most of these milking-machines are driven by electricity, the number of electric motors having increased from practically nil in 1920 to approximately 66,000 to-day. There has been an equally marked increase in the number of tractors over the period. In the grain-farming districts the old-time horse-plough and reaper-and-binder are giving place to tractor-drawn ploughs and headers respectively.