

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

A disturbing feature in the fruit industry is the continued shortage of all varieties of fruit-trees for the replacement of unprofitable and diseased trees in existing orchards and the establishment of new orchards. Until this shortage is overtaken, the quantity of fruit produced is unlikely to be sufficient for domestic and export requirements.

PRODUCTION

The quantity of fruit produced during the 1945-46 season was :—

	Bushels.
Apples	2,898,100
Pears	256,820
Stone-fruit	557,600
Lemons	97,875
Other citrus	69,770

Apple-production was higher, but pear-production decreased by 107,000 cases on the previous season.

The total 1945-46 production of apples and pears was distributed as follows :—

	Apples.	Pears.	Total.
	Bushels.	Bushels.	Bushels.
Exported to Great Britain	281,969	..	281,969
Distributed to consumers by Internal Marketing Division ..	2,086,984	181,971	2,268,955
Sold privately by growers	270,230	52,660	322,890
Sold to canning-factories	150,317	21,689	172,006
Sold for dehydration, pulping, cider, &c.	108,600	500	109,100
Totals	2,898,100	256,820	3,154,920

The apple and pear crop estimates for the 1946-47 season are 1,840,000 bushel cases of apples and 278,000 of pears. The substantial decrease in the apple crop is due to severe frosts in Canterbury and Otago, gales and drought in Hawke's Bay, and generally to a lighter setting of the pip-fruit crop.

Stone-fruit.—In Central Otago a severe frost more than halved anticipated production, while the Canterbury crops were adversely affected by frost and hailstorms.

The estimated production of stone-fruit for 1946-47 season is :—

	Bushels.
Peaches	211,000
Nectarines	15,000
Apricots	70,000
Plums	89,000
Cherries	11,000

A number of new stone-fruit orchards have been established near Alexandra and Hastings during the past year and pip-fruit trees have replaced stone-fruit trees in some instances.

Citrus Fruits.—The estimated citrus production for the 1946-47 season is :—

	Bushels.