

VEGETABLE-PRODUCTION

Although there has been a slight decrease in area used for vegetable-growing in the Auckland district, the Dominion acreage has increased.

Registrations.—The 2,850 commercial vegetable-producing areas registered in 1945–46 represented 20,000 acres, of which 650 acres were devoted to glasshouse crops.

Land requirements for housing have caused reduction of vegetable-producing areas in populated centres. Consequently, commercial vegetable-production is now being established on suitable land farther away from consuming centres.

Officers have visited market-gardeners throughout the Dominion and advised on cultural and disease problems. The Plant Diseases Division of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research has given valuable assistance in this work.

THE HOME GARDEN

Public interest in the home vegetable and flower garden has increased in recent years. Most noticeable is the average home gardener's desire for guidance in the adoption of approved cultural methods.

BULB-GROWING INDUSTRY

An endeavour is being made to increase the variety and quantity of bulbs grown for export and local use. Research, however, is needed on such matters as the cultural aspects of tulip-growing, pest and disease control on narcissi and other kinds of bulbs and corms, grading of bulbs, and preparation for shipment.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY

A further increase in the tobacco acreage is recorded. The comparative figures for 1945 and 1946 harvesting years are :—

	1945.	1946.
Area cropped	3,383	3,405
Poundage sold	3,288,968	4,080,135
Number of licensed tobacco-growers ..	487	553

Tobacco-manufacturers are making extensive additions to their leaf-conditioning and storage establishments in Motueka and erecting new large buildings.

HOP INDUSTRY

The hop-growing industry suffered a severe setback by the low production of the 1946 season, when only 1,828 bales were delivered into the store, as compared with 3,103 bales in the 1945 season. The incidence of blackroot in the hop-gardens necessitated a greater number of plants being replaced with the resulting lower yield per acre. An additional 50 acres were planted, but this has been offset by a corresponding area in the older gardens going out of production.

PLANT NURSERIES

The registration of 752 plant nurseries was an increase of 92 over that of the previous year. Particular attention has been paid to the inspection of nurseries raising fruit-trees and stocks. The nurseries are maintained in a satisfactory condition and reasonably free from disease, but in one large nursery citrus canker was found, and drastic measures were taken to have all infected trees destroyed.

There is a sustained demand for all kinds of fruit-trees, fruit-bushes, ornamental trees, shrubs, trees for farm planting, and bedding-out plants.