

Experiments which it is hoped will result in increased production and better methods of combating disease and pests are being conducted by the Cawthron Institute and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

A small levy is made by the Committee on all raspberries marketed for manufacturing purposes, and also in buckets and other similar containers, such levy being sufficient to finance the expenses of the Committee and to help in investigation and research work.

FERTILIZERS

Importations of sulphate of ammonia, nitrate of ammonia, and muriate of potash have been coming forward regularly to the Division, and ample supplies have been available to meet requirements of New Zealand farmers and market-gardeners. Sulphate of potash, which is available for tobacco-manufacture only, has also been imported to the extent required by tobacco-growers.

MOLASSES

The Division's supplies of molasses are now almost exhausted, and no further importations are being made. Licenses for importations of molasses have been granted to customary importing firms, and supplies are coming forward through their usual channels in fairly regular quantities. No shortage has occurred, and the demand is still limited owing to the high ruling prices.

APPLE AND PEAR SECTION

FRUIT MARKETING COUNCIL

The Council, consisting of five grower representatives and five Government representatives, continued to act during the period under review. The subsidy and guarantee arrangement which was introduced at the time of the establishment of the Council still continues, and an extra subsidy of 4.23d. per case was granted as compensation for increases in orchard-labour rates this year. The general function of the Council is to direct the distribution of apples and pears, working through the authority of the Division.

Two grower representatives on the Council are required to resign during 1946, and elections will be required in order to fill the vacancies which will consequently occur. In addition, there was one resignation during the period under review, and an election will be held to fill this vacancy.

CROP

At this time of the year, fruit is still being received from growers and it is not therefore possible to give accurate details as to the total crop received by the Division for marketing. It is likely that it will be in the region of 2,550,000 cases of apples and pears, of which pears will account for only 180,000 cases. The apple crop is the greatest since 1938, and of apples and pears together the total crop compares favourably with that of 1941. The total would have exceeded that figure, except that large quantities were diverted this year for processing purposes. In addition, the crop would have been far greater than it has been had not the growers in Canterbury been unfortunate enough to suffer hail losses, whilst the growers in Hastings and Nelson suffered severe losses through the long drought conditions. Besides reducing the available crop, these conditions contributed very largely to an increased proportion of small sizes which have been received during this year. An abundance of small sizes such as was experienced creates a marketing difficulty, as the smaller sizes are not popular with the consuming public. Moreover, the lower return reflects on the overall return to the grower. The quality of the fruit in general has not been high this season, the later pickings of the varieties Cox Orange and Jonathan especially being of weak texture. The dry period experienced in both Nelson and Hawke's Bay was followed by a spell