

“marginal.” Whilst there are numbers of efficient Maori dairy-farmers and an upward trend in production is recorded, instruction in better farming practice must be adopted to bring about a general over-all improvement. The efforts of the Field Supervision staff are being directed continuously to improving the pastures on Maori dairy-farms, the quality of the stock, and the handling of the herds. It is considered that with improved farms and farming methods the average production will tend to rise, and in time the gap between the average over-all production per cow will be closed.

The Herd Improvement Association delivered a series of lectures, illustrated by special dairy films dealing with the proper care and treatment of the dairy cow. The greatest interest was shown in these lectures by the Maori dairy-farmers, and it is hoped that further instructional matter of this nature can be arranged. The Department of Maori Affairs is very appreciative of the assistance rendered by the officers of the Herd Improvement Association.

LIVE-STOCK

It is the policy of the Department in connection with its land development schemes to breed its own stock requirements wherever the conditions are suitable. The total live-stock figures on all properties, including those under East Coast Commissioner control, were 519,581 sheep and 118,881 run cattle as at 31st March, 1949. Wherever possible all surplus stock bred on the schemes and stations are sold as “fats,” but in cases where it is necessary to dispose of stock in store condition it is usual to arrange transfers at market rates to schemes where fattening can be carried out.

Wool.

The development schemes produced 7,104 bales of wool, compared with 6,512 last year. The stations administered by the Maori Trustee produced 1,735 bales, and the properties managed by the Maori Land Boards, 1,014 bales. The clip returned on the stations under the control of the East Coast Commissioner was 2,966 bales. The total number of bales for the year ending 31st March, 1949, on these stations, schemes, and farms was therefore 12,819 bales. Special attention is paid to the preparation of the wool clip, and the Department has a Wool Inspector whose duties are to see that the “get up” of all wool marketed meets with the requirements of the trade. It is gratifying to learn that, due to instructions given in the shearing-sheds by the Inspector, a distinct improvement has been shown over the last two seasons in the classing and methods of preparing the wool for sale.

HORTICULTURE

Four Horticultural Supervisors have been appointed to advise Maoris in the better utilization of the numerous small areas scattered throughout the country. The land is usually sufficiently fertile to encourage the growing of commercial crops with some degree of confidence. Kumara-production provides one of the major activities in this direction, and it is estimated that the annual value is in the vicinity of £40,000. The growing of water-melons, potatoes, maize, tree tomatoes, raspberries, asparagus, and tomatoes, besides other lines of vegetables and flowers, provides useful and remunerative employment for a large number of Maori men and women. The extent of Maori cropping activities is not generally appreciated, but the increased production consequent upon war requirement demand is being maintained and even increased. Assistance in the marketing of crops and an improvement in the quality of the produce, in addition to better distribution, is showing beneficial results.

Owing to the influence of departmental officers, particularly the Horticultural Supervisors, greater interest is being shown in production for home requirements of citrus and other fruits, besides a wider range of vegetables. It is anticipated that the greater variety of food, home grown, and the consequent higher dietetic standard, will be reflected in the