

During the past three decades Instructors in Agriculture have devoted the major part of their activities to the improvement of pasture-production on ploughed land, and their work has been reflected in the greatly-increased volume of production from those lands. Increased attention is now being paid to the problems of pasture improvement on hill-country grazing-lands, for it is these lands which present the chief problems in soil conservation and which must provide an increasing volume of wool and store, breeding, and fat stock if primary production is to keep pace with the Dominion's increasing population.

LECTURES, FIELD-DAYS, AND FARM SCHOOLS

The Division carried out a very successful programme of lectures, field-days, and farm schools, and was assisted in the farm-school work by officers of other Divisions and Departments and by lecturers from the agricultural colleges. Thirty-two farm schools were held, the Division organized 242 field-days, and the Instructors delivered an additional 615 special lectures. Weekly radio talks were continued from Auckland, and broadcasts were also given from Palmerston North, Wellington, and Christchurch.

The Division's supply of instructional films and lantern-slides is being improved, and the Visual Aids Officer took approximately 2,000 photographs during the year for use in illustrating departmental publications, for the preparation of lantern-slides, and for general publicity.

FLOCK HOUSE FARM OF INSTRUCTION

Flock House Farm of Instruction has continued to provide farm training for its complement of forty-five trainees, and there is a considerable waiting list of entrants. The lecture course has been widened by calling in the Department's specialist officers, and the scope of the practical work has been enlarged by beginning land-improvement on the coastal sand country, which will provide experience in cultivation, fencing, and pasture and crop production. Increased attention has been given to farm side-lines and the poultry, garden, orchard, and apiary units now provide the requisite facilities for instruction.

The Station's farming operations were successful: approximately 1,000 acres were top-dressed, and with further top-dressing and pasture renewal the Station's present carrying capacity of 6,000 ewes should be considerably improved.

YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS

In the Young Farmers' Clubs movement during the year there has been general improvement in club work and activities. Eighteen new clubs were formed and 14 clubs were closed. There were 310 active clubs at the end of the year, with a membership of 9,000 and an advisory and honorary membership of 1,500. The numbers of clubs in the four council areas in the past two years were:—

Council.	1947-48.	1948-49.
Auckland	108	115
Wellington	97	95
Canterbury	54	53
Otago-Southland	47	47
	306	310

The usual club activities of lectures, debates, discussions, field-days, &c., have been generally well organized. Parties of young farmers have travelled to see farming in other districts, and during the year eleven tours were arranged. A national ploughing match was held at Waimate, South Canterbury. Shearing contests were held on a district scale in a number of areas and on a council scale in Wellington. Clubs have also continued co-operative experimental work with the Division. The usual debating and stock-judging competitions were held on a national scale.