Occupied Land

The total area of land under occupation has not varied materially during the period under review: the peak was reached in 1925, since when some land—probably of a sub-marginal nature—has become "unoccupied." Subdivision of holdings has taken place, resulting in an increased number of occupiers and a reduction in average area of farms.

Table III—Total Area Occupied, Number of Holdings, and Average Size of Holdings, 1920–47.*

Year.	Total Occupied Area (000 Acres).	Number of Holdings.	Average Size of Holdings.
1920	43,473	81,592	532·81
1925	43,632	85,977	507·49
1930	43,369	85,167	509·22
1935	43,105	84,867	507·91
1940	42,928	86,304	497·40
1945	43,006	86,247	498·64
1947	43,100	86,483	498·36

* Agricultural and Pastoral Statistics.

A more detailed study shows that the major movements in size and number of holdings have been a material reduction in the number of small farms—some subdivision of very large areas, and a rapid development of economic family units ranging from 50 acres to 320 acres. These are devoted essentially to intensive production of dairy products and fat lambs, depending on improved pasture-management.

Table IV—Number of Holdings, by Sizes and Total Occupied Area, for Each Size for 1920 and 1947*

Size (Acres).	Number.			Area (000 Acres).		
	1920.	1947.	Difference.	1920.	1947.	Difference.
Under 10	15,554	11,450	−4,104	72	53	−19
11–50	13,367	13,838	+471	377	351	−26
51–100	10,039	12,824	+2,785	380	937	+157
101–320	21,579	26,837	+5,258	4,128	4,850	+722
321–640	10,116	10,486	+320	4,642	4,742	+100
641–1,000	4,080	4,130	+50	3,301	3,290	−11
1,001–5,000	5,722	5,881	+159	11,306	11,497	+191
5,001 and over	1,085	1,037	−48	18,867	17,380	−1,487
	81,592	86,483	+4,891	43,473	43,100	−373

* Agricultural and Pastoral Statistics.

The Technique of Grassland Farming

The foregoing tables show clearly that rapid and, in fact, almost spectacular progress has been made in live-stock production from a relatively static area of occupied land and of land sown in grass. How has this progress been possible? The answer lies virtually in one word—grass. By the development of good-quality pastures properly managed and top-dressed with adequate supplies of phosphatic fertilizers, many farmers have achieved levels of production which are eulogized internationally. It is true, however, that the quality of a large proportion of New Zealand's pastures still leaves much to be desired and there is all too frequently a lack of adequate utilization of surplus pasture growth.