

Apart from North Otago and Central Otago, both of which suffered from drought, pasture growth in Otago and Southland was considered the best for many years. This resulted in a surplus of root and green fodder crops and was reflected in the improvement of fat-lamb production as well as in dairying output. There were difficulties in controlling the exceptional flush of feed in Southland, especially on sheep-farms where cattle are not normally used for pasture control.

Supplementary Fodder

Hay and Silage.—During the past summer a good deal of hay was saved in the North Island, but owing to showery conditions during the harvesting period much of it was of inferior quality. The baling of hay has become very popular and is increasing. The favourable season enabled farmers in the central part of the North Island to build up stocks of hay which had been depleted during the drought of 1948, after which some assistance by way of railage subsidy on hay became necessary. In dairying districts there was a marked increase in silagemaking, partly because of the earlier spring growth, but also probably on account of the weather being somewhat unsettled for satisfactory haymaking.

In the South Island, harvest weather was mainly satisfactory and the quality of hay saved was generally good, although it was light in quantity in parts of Canterbury and North Otago.

Lucerne.—Slight increases in the area of lucerne were reported, especially in those districts in the North Island which suffered from drought during the two previous seasons. New stands established fairly well and established stands yielded good crops of hay.

Swedes and Turnips.—Both swedes and turnips are being grown to a greater extent in some districts in the North as part of the plough and resow policy for pastures. Crops were generally good.

In the South Island, especially in Southland, the area in swedes and turnips is decreasing. Early-spring sowings established well, but later dry conditions retarded growth of the later-sown crops in Canterbury and North Otago.

Rape and Chou Moellier.—Good crops of chou moellier were grown in the North Island, where this fodder crop is increasing in favour for lamb-fattening and for winter and early-spring feed for sheep and cattle. Rape crops were poor in Canterbury but satisfactory in Otago and Southland. The new club-root-resistant type is in particular demand in the South, where it is giving good results.

Cereal, Pulse, and Food Crops

Conditions in the autumn were favourable for sowing of cereals and it is estimated that there was a substantial increase in the over-all acreage. Dry conditions during late summer in the main grain-growing districts had an adverse effect on yields but enabled harvesting to be carried out under good conditions, except in Southland. Details of estimated crop acreages and the comparative figures for 1947–48 are as follows:—

	1947–48. Acres.	1948–49. Acres (Estimated).
Wheat (all purposes)	125,439	150,000
Oats (all purposes)	177,252	190,000
Barley (all purposes)	73,275	65,000
Potatoes	21,887	19,500
Peas	52,138	50,000
Onions	1,572	*
Maize (for grain)	7,345	*

* Not available.