

A general survey of orchards in the Auckland district undertaken in 1948 is almost complete. Its object was to obtain a picture of age groups of fruit-trees, cultural practices, and the general health and condition of trees.

The Division is responsible for setting the grading standards and inspection of apples and pears distributed through the Marketing Department for sale to the public or for export overseas. To check the growers' standard of grading, the Division's Inspectors at assembly points select about 5 per cent. of each line for inspection.

Apple and pear assembly depots operate during the fruit season (January to June). The principal depots are at Hastings, Nelson, Mapua, Motueka, and Auckland. The Te Kauwhata depot was closed in 1948, and new facilities were provided at Alexandra.

In 1948, 2,950,410 cases of fruit, comprising 2,621,365 of apples and 329,045 of pears, were passed by the Inspectors. Of the apples, 78 per cent. were graded Fancy and 20 per cent. Commercial, the balance being Minimum. Of the pears, 86 per cent. were Fancy, 12 per cent. Commercial, and the balance Minimum.

One hundred and sixty-six thousand cases of apples and 33,500 of pears were sold to canning and dehydration factories. In addition, 120,000 cases were used for cider and other purposes.

The two principal apple-producing districts in 1948 were :—

	Bushel Cases.
Nelson	1,338,000
Hawkes Bay .. .	993,000

Other centres with a production of more than 100,000 cases were :—

	Bushel Cases.
Auckland and Hamilton .. .	375,000
Canterbury .. .	169,000
Marlborough .. .	131,000
Central Otago .. .	120,000

The major pear-producing centre in New Zealand in 1948 was Hawkes Bay with 249,000 bushel cases.

Other centres with a production of more than 10,000 cases were :—

	Bushel Cases.
Nelson	87,000
Auckland and Hamilton .. .	48,000
Central Otago .. .	24,000
Canterbury .. .	18,000

The production of apples and pears during 1948 in Nelson was the heaviest since these fruits were distributed through the Marketing Department.

Dominion total production was estimated as 3,240,000 bushel cases of apples and 444,000 cases of pears.

Horticultural field officers forecast a reduction of about 800,000 cases of apples and 80,000 cases of pears for the 1949 season, the figures at 31st March being 2,453,000 cases of apples and 361,000 cases of pears.

The Apple and Pear Marketing Board was appointed in December, 1948, and the Division has assisted the Board during its first season's operation.

The appointment of this Board and the basis on which prices will be paid for apples and pears in 1949 and subsequent years give a new stability to this important branch of horticultural production.

Pip-fruit orchards in Hawkes Bay and Nelson have a well-cared-for appearance. Orchardists have been purchasing new power sprayers, tractors, cultivating implements, and grading equipment. These have contributed to increased efficiency, easier working-conditions, and better crops. As a whole, the orchards are now more fully equipped.