

For some years it has been realized that raspberries deteriorate quickly in transport, particularly over long distances. In January, 1949, the Department's Cool Storage Officer sent from Greytown to Auckland precooled raspberries in sealed tins. Although this fruit arrived in good condition, it is clear that further experimental work will need to be done before improved means are evolved for the transport of raspberries.

In January and February, 1949, experimental work was carried out with the transport of stone-fruit by rail, the object being to devise a way of reducing temperatures in railway trucks. Further work on this subject will be done in 1950.

HORTICULTURAL STATION, LEVIN

This station was established in 1947 with the following objects:—

- (1) To investigate the nomenclature and type varieties of all berry-fruits.
- (2) To record the responses of varieties of berry-fruits to different cropping and cultural methods.
- (3) To build up berry-fruit stock true to name for distribution to nurserymen for the commercial production of plants.
- (4) To inaugurate certificate schemes covering approved varieties of berry-fruits to keep the lines true to name and free from disease.
- (5) To investigate cultural methods for vegetables.

In 1946 and 1947 a selection of raspberry-canes was made in commercial gardens throughout the Dominion. From these canes 1,000 stools of twenty-six varieties were planted on the Station in September, 1947. These stools fruited in 1948-49, and from these, suckers of seven varieties of raspberries were selected on their fruiting merits for replanting. When those canes have fruited, only the best suckers will be selected, and the others eliminated.

Eight varieties of currants were imported from England, and two varieties from Russia were planted out in 1947. In addition, cuttings taken from seven varieties of currants growing in a commercial garden at Greytown were planted out in the Station. These plants will be tested, and cuttings will be taken from the more promising plants for propagation.

In February, 1947, four varieties of virus-free strawberries were imported from England and planted out at Levin for runner-production in September, 1947. About 10,000 runners were distributed for testing among commercial growers throughout the country. Although the results of these tests have not been summarized, it is clear that these strawberry varieties are readily subject to virus diseases under New Zealand conditions.

In the 1948-49 season a survey of commercial gardens for the best currant, gooseberry, loganberry, and Chinese gooseberry plants was made on similar lines to the raspberry survey of 1946-47.

Hop sets and hop cuttings imported from Tasmania have been quarantined at the Station pending transfer to Nelson.

HORTICULTURAL STATION, TE KAUWHATA

The 1948 crop was very satisfactory; the grapes harvested were manufactured into good-quality wine.

With improved cultural practices the grapes are ripening earlier, thus reducing the chances of the crop being affected by fungous diseases.

The cultural and wine-manufacturing equipment is up to date. An additional 5 acres were planted with 2,000 one-year rooted vines.