

resow, but this was probably more owing to bad weather conditions than to bad seed. With the exception of a few corners, the aphid and moth have not been bad. Club-root and root-rot have again been prevalent in the Brassica crops, more especially in swedes. The area of mangolds is greater than last year, and on the whole the crop promises to be a good one. As was the case last year, many farmers had to resow. The area of kales is about the same, and the season has been better for second growth. As usual, the early-sown rape crop was patchy, but the main crop was very good except in central Hawke's Bay.

In Hawke's Bay and Gisborne a fair area of field-pumpkins is grown, but the season has been too dry and the crop is light. On the west coast the season has not been suitable, and very few pumpkins are to be seen.

*Lucerne*: This crop has done well, especially from December on. The March growth was exceptionally good, which shows that even on this west coast lucerne will do better with frequent showers during the warm period. As was the case last year, the early-sown areas are patchy, but where the sowing was delayed until the early part of December the takes have been good. From the number of requests for advice and general interest shown I think that the area sown will show a considerable increase; especially is this the case in the Hawke's Bay and Gisborne districts. In both these districts lucerne does well over a considerable area; and when one considers the condition of a great deal of valuable stock, and the numbers that have died during the last two years for want of food, one wonders if it would not be a fair thing to prosecute many settlers for criminal neglect. The amount of seed sold by leading seedsmen on this west coast (including Taranaki) was 19,396 lb., against 22,845 lb. last year. In Hawke's Bay leading firms sold 16,293 lb., and in Gisborne 18,659 lb. In addition to these quantities large supplies are procured by growers direct from Wellington, Blenheim, and Christchurch.

The early hay crop was very light, but was saved under fair conditions. The later crops were much heavier, but as the weather was broken many of them were saved in indifferent condition, and some, particularly oat-hay crops, were so badly knocked about as not to be worth saving. I am pleased to say that good stacks of hay are noticeable this year in districts where in former years none were to be seen.

The area in maize in Hawke's Bay and Poverty Bay is much about the same as usual, and at present the yield promises to be fair. On the west coast the area is much the same, and the weight of green stuff very much better than usual. As there has been an abnormal growth of grass during the autumn a great deal of the maize is not required for green feed (for which purpose it was grown), and many farmers talk of making it into ensilage. Generally, however, they are afraid of the labour entailed. As regards ensilage in general, from the small number of stacks seen and the limited number of inquiries received it does not appear to be gaining very rapidly in favour—the labour question, as indicated, being the great bogey. Japanese millet is still grown for green feeding, and has done well this year. Where tried Sudan grass has also done well.

The potato area is much about the same as last year. The early crop was good and healthy, being free from blight. Owing to the moist conditions since the New Year the main crop has suffered rather badly from blight, and although the tubers were fairly well grown before the blight made its appearance it is found on digging that many of the tubers quickly rot. In Hawke's Bay the crop is light but fairly sound. Very little spraying is done.

Crops of rye-grass and crested dogstail were much better than last year. Cocksfoot was fair, but not a great deal was saved.

*Seeds*.—There have been a lot of complaints about bad germination, a great deal of which is traceable to badly prepared seed-beds and unfavourable weather conditions. At the same time the popular lines of seed have been very mixed, and in some cases the germination has been low.

*Pastures*.—At the time of writing (end of April) the pastures are good all along the west coast and through the Hawke's Bay side as far as Dannevirke; from there on north-west they get poorer, and after passing Waipukurau they are very bare. The same applies to the lower country in the Gisborne district.

*Winter Feed generally*.—As previously mentioned, the root crops are good along the west coast, and although the hay crop was light a larger area was saved. This, coupled with the good autumn growth, makes the winter prospects bright. On the east coast there are very few root crops, and what there are are very poor. There was practically no hay crop to save, and although sheep will get through fairly well cattle are going to have a hard time in many instances.

*Field Competitions*.—These continue of interest, and two new competitions were started during the year. As mentioned last year, I think these competitions are worthy of the Department's support.

*Fertilizers*.—These show a steady increase in value and, what is worse, they are difficult to procure, farmers being frequently forced to wait a considerable time and then accept anything offering. Shipments of Ephos phosphate have helped, and there has also been a little basic slag offering, but with the exception of one consignment of 18 per cent. it has been of low grade. Two or three shipments of high-grade slag are expected shortly, but these will show a considerable increase on last year's prices. A few samples of fertilizers have been taken for analysis, and one prosecution is pending. It is hoped to take more samples during the coming year.

*Lime*.—This is being more and more used, and practically all obtainable is being applied. During the year representative samples of soil were collected for analysis to ascertain the lime-requirement, and they have shown deficiencies from 14 cwt. to 8.2 tons per acre. A number of applications are still waiting, and will be attended to as fast as the samples can be dealt with by the Chemical Laboratory.

*Experimental Work*.—This has been confined to the Stratford, Waimate West, Marton, Rawhiti, and Waipukurau areas.

Stratford Model Dairy Farm: The experiments on this farm are more or less a continuation of last year's work. One new feature is the growing of special ensilage crops. These consisted of wheat, oats, and barley in conjunction with tares and peas, and the results will be of considerable interest to the district. From an area of about 8 acres approximately 100 tons of green material were made into an ensilage stack. As details of experiments are published from time to time it is