

When the turnips are ready for consumption they are fed off by sheep, and in this way the young pasture is consolidated and fertilized.

There are, of course, some neglected pastures, but on the whole the grass land is well farmed. The good stations are being steadily improved by careful grazing and management, and many of the pastures in the more intensely farmed areas are excellent. The fields are small, from 10 to 15 acres, often with wind-breaks of trees round them, and they are carefully grazed, harrowed, and fertilized. The grass itself is as free from weeds and as close and uniform as could be wished.

In the more favoured districts the grass grows practically all the year round, and the carrying capacity of the best pastures is very high. At Hastings, in the North Island, land was seen that was said to fatten six Romney wethers per acre, and it was stated that at Taranaki, the chief dairy centre, $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of the best land was sufficient to keep a cow.

Sheep.—Before the introduction of cold storage the farming of sheep for wool was the chief industry of the Dominion.

Merinos were the first sheep to be kept, mainly in the open and hilly parts of the country—more particularly in the South Island.

When the export of mutton and lamb became possible, the merinos were largely crossed with heavier British breeds, and sheep-farming was extended to the richer pastures in the moister parts of the country.

Merinos are still largely kept on the stations and on the mountains where the heavier breeds are not so good for mustering, but the breeding and feeding of sheep and lambs for export has also become a great industry.

The Southdown-Romney is said to be one of the favourite crosses for producing fat lambs.

We saw some splendid lambs so bred, and were informed that they would average from 36 lb. to 40 lb. in weight off the ewe at about four months old.

There are now approximately twenty-three million sheep in the country, and the wool-clip last year was valued at £12,000,000, compared with £8,057,620 in 1913. In 1921, 1,927,317 sheep and 4,410,895 lambs were slaughtered for export.

Dairying.—Dairying, which was rendered possible by the introduction of cold storage, is the other great branch of the pastoral industry, and the country is admirably adapted for it.

The rich pastures produce an abundant supply of the best of foods during the greater part of the year, and in certain favoured parts throughout the whole of the year. Owing to the mildness of the climate the animals can remain out in comfort all the year round. If hay, roots, or other food is needed to supplement the pastures in times of scarcity, which occasionally occur even in New Zealand, it can easily be grown.

In such circumstances the only buildings needed are a milking-shed and some provision for feeding the calves and separating the milk. The cost of equipment, feeding, and labour are thus reduced to a minimum.

It is stated in the Official Year-book that in the famous Taranaki District, where the soil is exceptionally rich, the rainfall about 70 in. per annum, and the climate mild, more butterfat is produced per acre than on an equal area in any other part of the globe.

Milking-machines are largely and increasingly used. In 1922, 12,500 machines were in use, against 10,450 in 1921, and it is estimated that in the former year approximately 533,000 cows were milked by them, usually in what are termed "walk-through" sheds.

The greater part of the cream or milk, as the case may be, is converted into butter or cheese or other substances at the factories, where it can be handled more economically and efficiently than upon the farms.

There are now over four hundred factories in the Dominion, of which 320 are owned by farmers' co-operative associations.

In 1922-23, 66,000 tons of butter and 60,000 tons of cheese and dried and condensed milk, sugar, &c., to the value of £16,207,053, were exported. As the Minister of Agriculture proudly states this renders New Zealand "the largest exporter of dairy-produce in the world."

Owing to its suitability for small holders and to the difficulty in obtaining labour, dairying is tending more and more to become a one-man or one-family occupation, though in the case of a single man help of some kind is essential.

The Share System.—The easiest and safest method of starting dairying is on the share system. Before the introduction of milking-machines it was largely adopted. We met many men who had established themselves on farms by means of it, and were now in comfortable circumstances—in some cases very prosperous.

Unfortunately, it is not so common as formerly, and in any case owners of farms would not care to trust their herds to men without experience in milking and in the management of dairy cattle.

Leasing of land, as in England, is not common. As a rule, therefore, the new-comer has to purchase land, which is a costly and, until one has gained experience of the country, a risky business. Though the industry has progressed so wonderfully there is still room for improvement and expansion. In his report for 1922-23 the Minister of Agriculture, after stating that the number of dairy cows at present in the Dominion is 50 per cent. higher than it was five years ago, says: "Further great expansions of the industry may be confidently anticipated. Large tracts of fresh lands are being brought in and older pastures improved by top-dressing; growing of auxiliary forage crops is increasing and better feeding methods practised generally. Together with these factors is the present remarkable development of the herd-testing system, which, by gradually eliminating unprofitable animals, cannot fail to result in a steady increase in the average yield of dairy cows in the Dominion."

Stock.—Beef can be produced in New Zealand equally as well as milk, and some excellent herds of beef cattle—well grown, thick-fleshed, and full of quality—were seen, but at present the financial returns from slaughter cattle are not very satisfactory.