

of packing, &c., the credit of which is due in a large measure to the Poultry Instructors, who supervised the work of testing, grading, and packing. It is unfortunate that owing to food-shortages the industry receives a periodical set-back, as the New Zealand poultry-producer is in a unique favoured position so far as markets are concerned. The price obtainable for his products on the local market are all that could be desired, whilst, owing to having opposite seasons, any summer surplus of eggs can be exported to London at payable prices to the producer.

The erection of the new poultry-station at Wallaceville is now nearing completion. Already there are over five hundred birds on the plant. It is expected after the forthcoming breeding season that the farm will be fully stocked and equipped. The chief functions of the plant will be to demonstrate up-to-date methods in the management of poultry, to supply sittings of eggs, and birds for breeding purposes from tested stock, at moderate prices; and also to conduct experiments by way of investigating problems connected with the various branches of poultry work which are beyond the scope of the average producer to carry out.

During the year the Poultry Instructors have been busily engaged in complying with the many requests for their services by delivering lectures, giving demonstrations, visiting plants, and generally imparting the elements of profitable poultry-keeping to farmers and poultry-keepers in all parts of the Dominion.

WOOL.

The good season which the sheep of the Dominion went through was reflected in the improved condition of the wool. The quantity of wool which has come forward shows an excess over the previous year, and the increase at the end of the season should be a substantial one.

The price obtained during the season is expected to average a little over 12d. per pound, being a slight increase on that of the previous year. The market price would now appear to have become stabilized at or about its present level. Any tendency towards a movement in the price shows indications of being in an upward direction.

The following table shows the average price per bale obtained in the different selling centres throughout the Dominion for the past and previous year respectively:—

	1925-26.			1926-27			Increase per Bale.		
	(per Bale)			(per Bale)			1926-27.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Auckland	15	12	11	16	8	10	0	15	11
Napier	16	15	11	17	4	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	8	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Wanganui	16	15	1	17	5	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	9	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Wellington	17	8	6	18	5	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	17	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Christchurch	17	1	8	19	15	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	2	13	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Timaru	17	0	5	19	9	0 $\frac{3}{4}$	2	8	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
Dunedin	17	2	11	19	16	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	2	13	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Invercargill	14	14	11	15	19	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	15	0 $\frac{1}{2}$

As will be gathered from the table, those districts growing the finer wools obtained a relatively higher average increase, showing this class of wool to be in better demand by the buyers than during the previous season.

The matter of wool-deterioration has been receiving the attention of departmental officers, and with a view to assisting farmers to improve the quality of their wool by using rams showing purer wool the examination of wool staples from rams has been taken up by the Department and reports supplied to the owners. In this way and by practical demonstrations at lectures and on the farms much good work in the direction of improvement should be accomplished and many of the defects removed. The trouble is, however, more apparent in small flocks, when the selection of a ram, unfortunately, does not always depend so much on the question of the quality of the wool as on the price at which it can be purchased. So long, therefore, as purchasers of rams neglect the question of the quality of the wool, so long will wool-deterioration be a burning question. Another matter which has a very decided bearing on the question of wool-deterioration is that of the retention of the ewe lamb for the future flocks, and greater care is necessary to see that the best of the ewe lambs are retained for this purpose and not the culls. No breed can be exempt from wool-defects if breeding is not carried out with proper regard to maintaining and improving quality; but as the Romney Marsh is our dominant breed, particularly in the North Island, that breed has naturally received most mention from abroad in regard to wool-defects. The trouble is one not so much of breed as of breeding.

The question of jute-fibre in wool has also received attention, and various "all-wool" wool-bales and treated jute-bales have been examined and reported on. The all-wool bale is not yet satisfactory.

SWINE HUSBANDRY.

The development of the pig industry has been slow, but the past year has shown a somewhat more satisfactory increase. It is also a promise of greater development ahead to note the increased activity in stud-stock breeding which is taking place throughout the Dominion. A considerable number of stud pigs (mostly Large Whites) have been imported from Australia during the year, and a keen demand has also been manifested for the purchase of good stud stock bred in New Zealand. The statistics taken as at the 31st January, 1926 (the last available), show an increase of 32,419 pigs compared with the previous year, and exports have increased during the year from 39,175 cwt., of a value of £146,668, to 90,630 cwt., of a value of £341,868. The Department has endeavoured on all possible occasions to stimulate an interest in the pig industry as one offering good prospects for increasing our exports, but it is nevertheless recognized that the matter is largely one of economical production in order that the price available might be a payable one. A demand exists for our production of frozen pork at what appears to be a payable price, and there is an insistent demand for it from the trade in England, so if production costs can be reduced to a minimum the export should be profitable.