

As regards sheep, the Southdown flock has done well, giving a lambing return of over 100 per cent. Rams sold well, realizing up to 11½ guineas and topping the market at the local ram fair. In addition to the Southdowns, a flock of 1,120 breeding-ewes is being carried, and good returns were obtained from the sale of both fat lambs and wool.

The production from the dairy herd was affected by the dry summer; nevertheless the returns will be up to the average of the two preceding years. A number of cows were put under the semi-official test, Jerseys, Shorthorns, and Ayrshires being included. One Jersey heifer was awarded the breed association's silver medal.

Unfortunately, the piggery building was destroyed by fire in March and a new building has had to be erected. Some ninety-five pigs were lost, but fortunately all the stud boars and all but five of the breeding-sows were saved.

The poultry section has been remodelled on modern lines, and now shows a small margin of profit after allowing for wages and all expenses.

The apiary has been the subject of special attention, and some changes in connection with it are contemplated. Six trainees took a course of instruction during the season.

Ruakura Farm Training College.

Some thirty-five students are in residence. The course, which was formerly one of two years, has now been cut down to one and a half years, though students can stay on for a full second year if desired. It seems evident that more publicity is needed in connection with this institution, which affords good facilities for lads to obtain a training in elementary agricultural science as well as in the practical side of farm-work. Lads of sixteen years of age or over are eligible, and the fees are only £36 per annum, in return for which comfortable quarters, good food, and sound instruction are provided.

Weraroa.

The unusually dry summer rather militated against the productivity of this farm, but apart from this a good season was experienced.

The herds of Friesian and Red-polled cattle have been maintained at a good standard, but the annual sale of young bulls and heifers proved very unsatisfactory, there being evidently a poor demand for breeding-stock of these types. Pigs sold readily enough, but at lower values than in the preceding year. The sheep-farming operations proved very satisfactory. The Ryeland flock has done well and should be a good asset to the farm. There was not, however, so strong a demand for rams of this breed as had been anticipated. New blood is needed as soon as importations from England are permissible. For the purposes of the grassland research carried on by the Fields Division 5 acres, divided into separate plots, have been sown down with specially selected seed.

During the year the total expenditure, excluding permanent salaries but including cost of experimental work, was £5,174, while the total receipts were £6,140. Permanent salaries amounted to £1,849.

As stated in previous reports, this establishment has served its purpose as an experimental farm, and there is nothing to be gained by the Department continuing to conduct it on its present lines. If it is to be continued, it should be completely commercialized and the overhead costs thereby greatly reduced.

TE KAUWHATA HORTICULTURAL STATION.

The main activity at this station continues to be grape-growing and winemaking, this being in a healthy financial position. During the year the vineyard was extended for the introduction of a number of European varieties new to this country. Additional cellar accommodation was also brought into use.

The wattle plantations were worked as usual for tanning-bark, and auxiliary income was also derived from selling waste timber as firewood. The considerable area of grassland was again utilized for sheep, with increased financial returns.

The total receipts of the station for the year exceeded expenditure, including permanent salaries, by £1,868.

FERTILIZERS.

The report of Mr. A. F. Ellis, New Zealand representative on the British Phosphate Commission, which is attached to this report, sets out in detail the operations at Nauru and Ocean Islands during the year ending 30th June, 1928. From this it will be noted that the total imports of phosphate rock from all sources exceeded those of the previous year by 29,713 tons.