

In the main grain-growing area, the South Island, the season was most variable : while the winter was practically normal, conditions through the growing season were good, and though final figures are not yet available the position is advanced enough to indicate that relatively heavy yields have been produced.

OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF THE YEAR.

Included among the outstanding features of the farming industry for the year are :—

1. An increase of 4.283 per cent. in the production of butterfat for the eleven months ending June, 1936, as compared with the corresponding period of the 1934-35 season, and the probability that the production for the complete season ending 31st July will be only about 0.8 per cent. less than the record production attained in the 1933-34 season. This increase in total production is associated with an increase in the average butterfat-production of all dairy cows, which, in its turn, is correlated with the better feeding, resulting mainly from the more abundant pasture-growth in the latter half of the season.

2. Sales of wool have been record ones in respect of quantity, and have been characterized by solidity of demand and regularity of price, the fluctuations in prices from first to last being small indeed. It is of some moment that the quantity disposed of included a considerable amount of wool carried over—it is estimated that 49,400 bales of wool are being carried over from the 1935-36 season, whereas 186,679 bales were carried over from the 1934-35 season. As a joint result of increased quantity and improved price, the gross value of the wool sold in 1935-36 was £10,083,297, in comparison with £4,486,480 in the 1934-35 season.

3. A substantial increase took place in the number of carcasses of pigs killed for export, 662,754 being killed during the nine months to the 30th June, 1936, in comparison with 566,459 in the corresponding period of the previous season. The increase in the weight of pig-meat for export is greater than the above figures suggest, this being due to the fact that baconers constitute over 70 per cent. of the increase in number.

4. There was an increase in the killings of wether mutton for export from 940,401 in the nine months ended 30th June, 1935, to 1,143,311 in the corresponding period of 1936.

5. A decrease took place in the killings of ewe mutton for export from 1,179,092 in nine months ended 30th June, 1935, to 735,962 in the corresponding period ended 30th June, 1936. These killings confirm impressions obtained from autumn sheep-sales in indicating that the breeding-ewe numbers have been built up by retaining in the flocks ewes that normally in the past would be slaughtered on account of age.

6. A relatively large increase took place in the killings for chilled beef, which, however, continue small in comparison with other quantities of meat exported, the figures being 119,653 quarters for nine months ended 30th June, 1936, compared with 49,297 quarters for the corresponding period of the previous season.

7. An increase occurred in the quantities of apples and pears exported to 1,228,286 cases in the 1936 export season from 1,063,420 cases in the 1935 season.

8. There was a substantial increase in the wheat crop. Up to the end of May 82 per cent. of the total estimated area had been threshed for a total yield of 7,619,126 bushels, this giving an average yield of $38\frac{3}{4}$ bushels an acre, the corresponding figures for the previous season being 5,410,857 bushels and 27 bushels. As a result of flood damage, part of the unthreshed area may reduce the average figures.

9. A substantial increase has been recorded in the oat crop : up to the end of May, 1936, the total threshed was 3,227,525 bushels, giving an average of 47.7 bushels an acre, the corresponding figures of the previous season being 1,847,390 bushels and 38.68 bushels.

10. Increased deliveries of fertilizers by rail were made for the Dominion as well as for each Island separately, the Dominion total being 664,330 tons for the year ended 31st March, 1936, an increase of 38,309 tons in comparison with the previous corresponding year.

11. Record deliveries of lime by rail were made for the Dominion, these, however, involving a decrease of 9,610 tons in North Island deliveries and an increase of 11,130 tons in South Island deliveries for the year ended 31st March, 1936, in comparison with the corresponding previous year.

12. An increase took place in the honey exported to 10,446 cases valued at £34,258 for the year ended 31st March, 1936, in comparison with 5,427 cases valued at £17,844 in the corresponding previous year.

INCREASED EFFICIENCY.

In the reports of the two immediately preceding years certain trends towards increased efficiency which were then evident were noted, and from the foregoing it seems clear that the effects of some of these trends are already reflected in our farming. It is noteworthy also that growing attention continues to be given to some of the major matters bearing on our farming efficiency.