

large and small poultry-keepers is on the increase. Five feeding-tests with some two hundred adult pullets were carried out during the year, and five similar tests with a different lot of birds are being carried out this year. The result of these tests should prove of interest and value to poultry-keepers.

“Chilled Eggs (Marketing) Regulations.”—Visits of inspection to the various cool-stores showed that those concerned have complied with the regulations. Less eggs were cool-stored during last flush season, owing, it is said, to the fact that some difficulty was experienced last season in selling eggs marked ‘chilled.’

“In order to avoid trouble by persons who may be inclined to evade the regulations, I would recommend that the regulations be amended so as to provide for the stamping of all cool-stored eggs.

“Egg-laying Tests.”—The four laying-tests at Auckland, Taranaki, Massey College, and Christchurch were again well supported. The birds and eggs were judged three times during the year by the Department’s Poultry Instructors, and, generally speaking, the birds were found to be up to standard, while those competing at Christchurch were a little better than usual.

“Three Khaki Campbell ducks did well at Christchurch in laying 935 eggs in fifty-one weeks, and six White Leghorns in laying 1,500 standard weight eggs in fifty-one weeks.

“At the Auckland test one Khaki Campbell duck produced a standard weight egg on each day of the fifty weeks of the test, while a second duck only missed two days during the same period.

“Instructional Staff.”—The reports of the three instructional officers show that, in addition to other duties, some 1,398 visits of instruction were paid to poultry-keepers during the year.

“The Instructors have had a busy time and are doing good work, which is much appreciated by poultry-keepers.

“The improved facilities of motor transport provided by the Department have enabled the Instructors to get in touch with more poultry-keepers and render greater service to the industry, which is much appreciated.”

WOOL.

A good season was experienced by woolgrowers, as will be seen from the following report of Mr. J. E. Duncan, M.Sc., Live-stock Husbandry Officer and Wool Instructional Officer for the Department :—

“The wool-selling season recently closed has seen the best returns to growers for nine years. From sales in the Dominion of 663,798 bales £14,903,257 was realized. Exact figures for the number of bales sent direct to London by farmers for sale are not available, but a fair estimate is about 80,000 bales which will fetch in the vicinity of a further £2,000,000, making the handsome total of somewhere in the region of £17,000,000.

“A brief comparison of statistics for the last three years is interesting :—

“Wool sold at Public Auction.

	1936-37.	1935-36.	1934-35.
Offered (bales)	668,397	768,933	527,283
Sold (bales)	663,798	737,454	471,512
Sold (lb.)	226,089,994	258,270,784	162,538,056
Total proceeds	£14,903,257	£9,840,427	£4,401,010
Average price—			
Per bale	£22 9s.	£13 6s. 10d.	£9 6s. 8d.
Per pound	15·82d.	9·144d.	6·498d.

“Another interesting feature this year, quite apart from the generally high trend of values, has been the abnormally small difference in price between the finest and coarsest lines of wool. Usually the former types of wool are worth about double the latter—*e.g.*, at the first Wellington sale the previous season average Merino was fetching 14d. and average low crossbred 7d. This year at the last sale of the Wellington series both Merino and low crossbred averaged about 19d. It is often difficult to explain the vagaries of the wool market, but it appears that the strong demand and excellent prices for wool have been brought about by several factors,—

“(a) With brighter economic conditions and greater spending-power vast numbers of people have been replenishing their wardrobes and furnishings.

“(b) Stocks of wool in consuming countries were low, and there was very little carried-over wool at auction this season, so that current supplies were quickly absorbed and barely met the demand.

“(c) There can be little doubt that huge rearmament policies overseas have had a great influence on the demand for wool, particularly the coarser sorts.

“(d) Fashion in the dress trade also played a part.

“On the whole this season the wool opened up well, in many cases being somewhat lighter in condition than usual, due to the abnormally wet season. There were complaints from the Wairarapa district that there had been a disastrous and mysterious drop in the weight of the local wool clip. However, taken over a number of properties, this reduction in weight averaging about 11 per cent.