

Wool Returns (Four Main Blocks).

	1934-35.	1937-38.
Number of bales	48	138
Weight of wool (lb.)	17·717	52·643
Value of wool	£285 15s. 2d.	£1,840 18s. 10d.
Price per pound (average)	3·87d.	8·39d.
Price per bale (average)	£5 19s. 1d.	£13 6s. 10d.

Live-stock carried (Four Main Blocks).

	1935-36.	1937-38.
Sheep	2,800	11,833
Dairy cattle	574	758
Run cattle	233	530

Main Improvements effected on Four Main Blocks.

	1935-36.	1937-38.
Fencing (chains)	6,469	8,074
Drains (chains)	540	2,070
Ploughing and cultivating (acres)	999	1,926
Permanent pasture (acres)	1,024	2,529

The breeding of sheep and cattle, which was commenced last year with the intention of supplying the replacements and requirements of the scheme, has been satisfactory, and the average lambing percentage over the whole of the scheme was approximately 99 per cent., and some 360 Polled Angus calves have been reared. It is a matter of satisfaction that the class of stock bred and farmed has again been the subject of favourable comment. One sale of 144 fat bullocks was made at a very satisfactory figure, and competent judges considered that the cattle were the best as to class and finish that had been seen for many years.

The dairy herds have shown satisfactory returns. Five herds totalling 420 cows were tested, and the returns to date show an average of approximately 250 lb. per cow.

Unfortunately, the eczema complaints affected the herds, which also suffered in production from the dry season.

It has been found advisable to pay more attention to the dairying operations, and for the past year one officer has been specializing in this branch and is also controlling the pig-breeding and marketing operations, which have shown a very satisfactory increase.

The sheep-breeding experiments at Mairoa and Arohena have again been successful, and included in the flocks will be some ewes bred on these schemes. The Arohena district has benefited very considerably by the operations of the scheme, as there has been practically complete ragwort control on those sections being farmed by the branch. Other sections will come in during the year, and this will enable practically the whole of the ragwort in the district to be controlled, provided, of course, that the necessary stock can be obtained when required.

In common with the farming community, the operations of the branch have suffered considerably by the effects of the abnormal summer conditions. Facial eczema, jaundice, and pneumonia have caused considerable losses by death, and although, in comparison with others, the actual losses have been light, yet there will be an adverse effect on the lambing and fattening during the coming season that cannot be estimated. Deaths amongst the lambs will considerably reduce the number which it was considered would be available for inclusion in the flocks.

The swede crops have also proved a failure, in spite of the fact that some were sown twice and every precaution taken. This reduction in the amount of winter feed available will considerably reduce the anticipated winter carrying-capacity. Fortunately, there are good supplies of hay, a portion of which is being pressed so as to enable it to be transferred, but it is anticipated that further supplies will be required.

The usual high standard of work has been maintained, and the large extension of work has fully taxed the capacity of the outside staff, and it is more evident than ever that the policy of close supervision is justified and essential.

In connection with the employment and accommodation of increasing numbers of men, it was found that expenditure on tents was a heavy one. On investigation it was found that a satisfactory hut of 16 ft. by 10 ft. fitted up for two men could be made at a very reasonable cost, and although the initial outlay was greater than for tents this is very soon offset by the reduced replacement charges and the fact that the wooden hut can very easily be converted into a store-shed when necessary. A special branch was set up, and men have been trained and can undertake repairs to buildings as well as make all the store-sheds, huts, bathrooms, &c., necessary—118 huts were completed, together with bathrooms, &c., at 31st March last.

In conclusion, it is again satisfactory to record that there has been little sickness or dissatisfaction amongst the 1,250 men, women, and children who depend on the schemes for their livelihood.