

"The following brief comparison of quantities and prices over four years is interesting:—

"Wool sold at Public Auction.

	1937-38.	1936-37.	1935-36.	1934-35.
Offered (bales)	687,718	668,397	768,933	527,283
Sold (bales)	614,609	663,798	737,454	471,512
Sold (lb.)	210,151,212	226,089,994	258,270,784	162,538,056
Total proceeds	£8,793,873	£14,903,257	£9,840,427	£4,401,010
Average price—				
Per bale	£14 6s. 2d.	£22 9s.	£13 6s. 10d.	£9 6s. 8d.
Per pound	16·013d.	15·82d.	9·144d.	6·498d.

"This shows that the producer is in about the same position from an income point of view as he was in 1935-36, for although the return is slightly greater this season, costs of production have also risen. In view of the reduced returns from wool, the levy of 6d. per bale for Wool Publicity Research and Propaganda may now seem more onerous, but it is more necessary than ever and should prove a good investment. During the last twelve months reports of discoveries of new types of synthetic fibres and improvements to already existing types have been increasingly numerous. Although some of these press reports must be treated with caution, there is no doubt that the wool-producing countries cannot afford for a moment to ignore these new competitors. Already two or three countries are enforcing the blending of certain proportions of synthetic fibre with wool for domestic use, and it can be said on good authority that some of these fibres which previously were used by the manufacturers only under compulsion are now gladly sought for their improved quality and relatively low price. Already there is a danger in wool prices going too high. As soon as this happens, substitution of the cheaper synthetic materials takes place, and there is a danger of each encroachment being a permanent one. More than ever is it necessary for us to pay attention to the quality of our product and its preparation for marketing. Apart from price, the great advantage of the artificial fibres is their uniformity and standardization. With a naturally varying product, such as wool, we can only achieve uniformity by strict attention to a proper system of breeding and, of course, culling. Those breeders who make the great mistake of trying to follow the market are always one step behind. The subsequent classing and preparation of the clip for marketing are equally important.

"The system of binning, by which each fleece is dealt with according to its merits, is the only method which can adequately deal with small wool clips. These are on the increase—particularly from such districts as the Waikato—and it is gratifying to note that binning is also on the increase. There have been few or no complaints from Home about New Zealand wool of late, and it is the opinion of a very well-known wool-buyer that the amount of hair in evidence among the wool this last season has been less. This is also gratifying, but instruction and propaganda work in this direction will have to continue if this improvement is to be maintained, for there are still many small farmers with whom wool is only a very secondary consideration.

"This season the most noticeable feature about the clip has been its lack of length—very few 'preparing' types being in evidence. There has also been a noticeable lack of weight in some districts (e.g., Hawke's Bay), and this has been due to not only the decreased length but also lack of condition (i.e., grease) in the wool, which fortunately to some extent tends to enhance its value and offset the lack of weight. Cotted fleeces and wool showing tenderness have also been frequently noticeable, and all these conditions are purely seasonal, due to climatic conditions. In parts of the South Island there has been a lack of length in evidence, also due to climatic, but quite different, conditions (viz., drought and lack of feed). This has resulted in rather more dust than usual in some of the Otago and Southland clips, though the dry season allowed growers to shear earlier and avoid bidi-bidi, which was some compensation.

"During the course of the year I have dealt with correspondence on a large variety of subjects, including requests for reports on wool samples. In several cases I have given advice on the farm regarding wool, and have delivered quite a number of lantern lectures and demonstrations to Young Farmers' Clubs. I have also prepared and attended wool exhibits at seven agricultural and pastoral shows, and will probably be doing quite a number more this winter. In this connection I have prepared plans and had built a half-inch scale model of a modern four-stand wool-shed and dip, and have under way a similar model set of sheep-yards. This model has attracted quite a lot of attention where exhibited, and I feel that it is serving a useful instructional purpose. I am at present collecting data for a new and comprehensive bulletin on the design and construction of wool-sheds, yards, and dips, as there is a considerable demand for these particulars. I have also made a preliminary investigation of the question of rugging sheep in New Zealand, and am preparing an illustrated article for the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture* on this subject, as I feel it has distinct possibilities in this country.

"During the course of the year I have also examined the wool of stud rams for export, prepared a duplicate set of wool samples, and obtained material for a diorama of the sheep and wool industry at the Glasgow Exhibition, prepared plans of wool-sheds, yards, and dips in reply to inquiries, prepared a report on wool allegedly damaged by dip, and collected further data on wool-scouring."