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A shipment of Australian apples and pears comprising 230,000 lb. of Cleopatra, London Pippin, Granny Smith and Jonathan apples and 418,000 lb. of Packham's Triumph and other varieties of pears arrived in the United States early in April. It was in perfect condition after a 28-day trip. This is the first occasion on which America has imported these fruits from Australia and further shipments are expected.

A scheme to assist the Australian livestock industry by granting subsidies to importers of cattle, draught horses, pigs, sheep and milch goats will operate from the 1st May. The subsidies, to which the Commonwealth and State Governments and the Commonwealth Bank will contribute, will be £100 a head for cattle and draught horses, £50 for pigs and £40 for sheep and goats. In addition, shipping companies have agreed to carry the stock at reduced rates. The scheme will be administered in New South Wales by the Department of Agriculture.

This Division is co-operating with the Illawarra Regional Development Committee in making a survey of the agricultural potentialities of the Region. The results of the survey should be of importance in determining the practicability of irrigation from the waters of the Shoalhaven River.

SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY

April, 1946.

SHEEP.

Supplies Lighter.

Fewer sheep and lambs were available than during the previous month, total supplies amounting to 226,613 head.

Public holidays resulted in a reduction in selling days while industrial trouble towards the end of the month brought about a serious dislocation in the meat trade generally.

Auctions which were to have been held on Wednesday, 24th April, were postponed until the following Monday, while trucks booked for the conveyance of stock for sales on 29th April were cancelled.

Prime Sheep Scarce.

Approximately 130,100 head of grown sheep were offered; prime descriptions were scarce, but useful trade sheep comprised a good proportion of the stock penned. On occasions, plain to medium quality wethers and ewes were numerous while many lines offered were only in forward store condition.

Lower Values Prevail.

Although values early in the period were very firm and at times showed an improvement of up to 2s. per head, prices did not hold, a sharp decline ranging from 2s. to 4s. per head being apparent later in the month. The industrial dispute towards the end of April, which affected continuity of supplies and auctions, resulted in a further reduction in rates.

As previously mentioned, sales which were set down for Wednesday, 24th April, were postponed and at a meeting of agents on the following Monday, it was decided to offer such sheep and lambs that were on hand to those persons who were in a position to handle stock. Operations were confined chiefly to dealers, restockers, country and near-country butchers and demand was much better than anticipated although generally realisations were lower, the decline in values ranging from 1s. to 3s. per head.

For the most part, good heavy wethers sold during April realised from 5½d. to 6d. but on occasions this class was disposed of at 5d. to 5½d. Heavy ewes sold at 4½d. to 5d. but values towards the end of the period ranged from 4¼d. to 4½d. per lb. Best light wethers made to 6d. per lb. but a fair proportion realised 5½d. to 5¾d. while on occasions only 5d. per lb. was paid. Light ewes mostly made 4¾d. to 5¼d. but some lots were secured at 4¼d. to 4½d. per lb.

Realisations, despite fluctuations, generally were satisfactory, wethers selling to 38s. and ewes to 33s. per head.

Lamb Supplies Improve.

Yardings were heavier than those of the previous month and comprised 96,587 head, representing an increase of about 7,000.

Quality showed considerable variation. Prime light sorts were scarce, but medium to good light trade lambs were fairly well in evidence. Most of the best lambs offering comprised heavy grades, ranging in weight from 38 lb. to 46 lb. and on occasions 50 lb. dressed.

Lamb Cheaper.

A good demand prevailed but the high rates of last month were not fully maintained. The general trend in prices followed closely that of grown sheep, rates being higher at the earlier auctions and lower at closing.

Mostly, good light lambs made from 9¼d. to 9¾d. and occasionally 10d., but at times this class cleared at 8¾d. to 9½d., or about ½d. per lb. lower than the best price obtained during March. The cost of heavy lambs ranged from 8d. to 9½d. per lb.

Hoggets were comparatively scarce and prices were fairly well maintained at 6¼ to 7½d. per lb.

The best grades of lamb frequently realised from 30s. to 38s. per head, with some drafts making to 42s., while up to 40s. per head was obtained for hoggets.

CATTLE.**Better Quality of Yardings.**

During the month, the normal Homebush selling programme was interrupted by the Easter vacation and later in April by industrial trouble at Metropolitan abattoirs. However, the total number of cattle available was only 876 below that of the offerings for March, 15,979 head being forwarded. This total comprised 13,529 fats, and 2,450 head auctioned in the store section.

The bulk of the yarding of 2,486 head listed for sale on 24th April was disposed of by private treaty to country butchers at undisclosed rates and the balance of 976 was sold by auction on the 29th.

The proportion of grown stock available from day to day varied considerably. Quality, however, was generally fairly good and represented an improvement on the previous month's standard.

Bullocks Well Supplied.

During the first half of the period, heavy bullocks were well supplied and sales were made mainly at 49s. to 53s. with occasional prime lots reaching 55s. per 100 lb. The odd lots available during the latter period sold mainly at 50s. to 53s. per 100 lb.

Both light and medium-weight bullocks made a good showing and at the commencement of the month, lightweights realised 49s. to 55s. with medium weights 50s. to 54s. per 100 lb. The market subsequently seemed to be oversupplied and prices eased, quotations at the end of the month being 49s. to 51s. for medium weights and 47s. to 51s. per 100 lb. for lightweights.

Steers Meet Good Inquiry.

Supplies of steers, particularly lightweights, continued to be heavy but a keen demand was evident throughout. The market at opening was firm at 49s. to 53s. per 100 lb. and values subsequently ranged from 50s. to 56s. Heavy supplies continued, however, and final clearances were made at the opening quotations.

Light Cows Dearer.

The number of cows forward generally was sufficient to meet buyers' requirements and all grades of weight and quality were submitted. Only occasional prime lots were available, the bulk consisting chiefly of fair to good trade lightweights. Rates for heavy descriptions were steady for the greater part of the month at 38s. to 43s. per 100 lb. but the market eased towards the close of April, sales were being made at 37s. to 40s. Prices for lightweight cows followed a different trend, and after an unsteady start at 38s. to 41s. the market firmed considerably, rates ranging from 36s. to 43s. per 100 lb. at closing.

Heifers Well Supplied.

Rates for heifers showed a further decline as the large number available seemed to be in excess of buyers' requirements. Prime lots sold well at 48s. to 53s. per 100 lb. but rates for other lots were 42s. to 48s.

Vealers Meet Good Inquiry.

Demand for vealers was strong and sales were made at the previous month's ruling rates of 54s. to 60s., with occasional sales at 62s. per 100 lb. On the last sale day of the month, there were very few regular operators in attendance and values were 20s. to 30s. per head lower, sales being made at 43s. to 52s. per 100 lb.

PIGS.**Moderate Numbers Offered.**

The number of pigs available was only moderate with supplies maintained at about the previous month's level. A total of 6,945 head was forward, of which receivals by rail accounted for 4,265. The offerings on each sale day were variable; at the opening sales, 2,789 were yarded while at the final auctions only 957 were submitted.

The falling-off in supplies was chiefly due to flood conditions which prevented some consignments from reaching the market.

Owing to the industrial dispute affecting slaughterings generally, the sale of pigs which was set down for the last day of the month was cancelled.

Baconers in Heavy Supply.

Bacon pigs were in heavy supply throughout and included a good proportion of heavy to extra-heavy grades, only moderate numbers of light to medium weights being available. Quality for the most part was fairly good.

The announcement that as from 1st May, 1946, a reduction of 1d. per lb. in the price of pigs of a dressed weight ranging from 180 to 200 lb. would operate was a contributing factor to the heavy yardings of this class of pig.

Values of baconers were irregular and a downward movement was evident, the average decline over the period being 10s. per head and occasionally more. The extra-heavy class of baconer dressing 200-240 lb. made to 9½d. per lb. or ¼d. below the best price ruling last month.

The fall in values, however, was more pronounced on the lighter baconers and while 10d. to 10¼d. per lb. was paid in some instances, a large proportion was disposed of at 8¾d. to 9¾d.

Backfatters Sell Well.

Prime, extra-heavy backfatters were in relatively short supply, but fair numbers of other grades of weight and quality were available. A good demand prevailed and the market was firm, rates ranging from 5¾d. to 7¼d. per lb. while up to £14 18s. 6d. per head was obtained.

Porkers Cheaper.

Porkers and suitable store pigs were in fairly heavy supply early in the month but the pennings were considerably lighter at the close. All descriptions were cheaper. Although up to 13¾d. per lb. was paid last month, 12½d. per lb. was the best price secured during the period for good light descriptions. Other grades, covering medium to heavy weights, realised from 9¾d. to 11¾d. per lb., with values at closing from ½d. to 1d. per lb. below those ruling at the beginning of April.

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