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SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY.

Sheep numbers decline.

Owing principally to the advent of the Christmas and New Year holiday period, the number of sheep and lambs penned during December was substantially below the previous month's aggregate. Supplies for the period totalled 347,543 head, representing a decline of about 150,000 head.

Plain sheep in heavy supply.

A total of 196,952 wethers and ewes was available but the proportion of good to prime grades was comparatively small. Very few good heavy wethers were received but heavy ewes were fairly well represented. Plain to medium quality sheep were numerous.

Values increase.

Over the greater part of the month values of good quality sheep remained steady but at the two sales held towards the close of December values rose sharply owing to a considerable reduction in supplies, the increase ranging from 3/- to 6/- per head.

When compared with the previous month, the average cost of good quality mutton was higher, the preponderance of plain sheep stimulating prices for the better grades. For the most part good light wethers realised from 4d to 5d per lb. and heavy descriptions 4d to 4½d. At closing, prices paid ranged from 5½d to 6½d and 4½d to 6d per lb., respectively. Light ewes generally realised 3½d to 4½d and heavy 3½d to 4d per lb. but 4d to 5d per lb. for light and 3½d to 4½d for heavy was secured at closing sales.

Sharp decline in lamb supplies.

Total supplies of 150,591 lambs for December showed a decline of about 108,000 head compared with November. Plain to medium quality lambs and suckers continued to constitute a fairly large proportion of the penning. Good to prime light descriptions were in relatively light supply but good heavy grades at times made a satisfactory showing, several consignments of exceptional good quality being available.

Higher prices rule.

Values of lambs and suckers generally did not vary appreciably from the improved prices prevailing at the end of November but rates rose sharply at the close of the month, many lines showing increases of from 3/- to 7/-, and more in places.

Suckers mostly sold at from 6½d to 7½d per lb. but at closing auctions realisations were from 7½d to 9½d with odd sales of special lots higher. Heavy lambs generally were obtained at 5½d to 6½d per lb. with some lots selling to 8½d. Good quality light lambs mostly were worth from 6d to 7d per lb. but by the end of the period prices increased to from 7½d to 8½d per lb.

Cattle supplies maintained.

Average consignments of cattle during December, 1945, were larger than those of November but there were only seven sale days and the monthly aggregate, 16,806 head, showed some reduction on the previous month's total. There were 1,601 auctioned in the store section. On the 18th, 3,258 head were yarded, the largest number since the corresponding sale of 1943.

A substantial proportion of the consignments comprised stock of medium to fair trade quality only, but increased numbers of good trade cattle were forward and the general standard was higher than that of November.

Rainfall during December was again well below normal over a large section of the State and the pastoral position showed further deterioration. It was obvious that the drought was responsible for a fair percentage of the consignments which came to hand.

Steady market for bullocks.

Good trade lightweight bullocks made a fair showing but other grades were in limited supply.

The market was fairly steady and quotations ranged chiefly to 53/- per 100 lb. On one occasion, however, lightweights were quoted to 55/-. Practically no really heavy bullocks were noted and prices per head rarely exceeded £20.

Good quality steers dearer.

Steers were well supplied and although many medium to fair trade sorts were submitted good trade light and medium weights made an improved showing. Good quality descriptions met a keen demand and values of these generally showed a sharp rise, quotations ranging to 58/- per 100 lb. on the final sale day. Values of the plainer grades, however, showed no improvement.

Variable consignments of cows.

Consignments of cows were most variable both as to numbers and the proportion of light and heavy descriptions. Demand was good and the market was steady until the final week when prices advanced. Quotations ranged chiefly from 39/- to 44/- per 100 lb. and to 46/- at the close. At opening, however, quotations ranged from 33/-.

Light supplies of heifers.

Heifers were in relatively light supply and on some occasions were noticed in odd lots only. Small sorts of generally good trade quality predominated. Fair to good trade lines met a steady demand but the market fluctuated somewhat for prime sorts which, at the closing sale, were quoted to 54/- per 100 lb.

Moderate supplies of vealers.

Truckings of vealers were moderate and all grades of weight and quality were included. Inferior sorts comprised a substantial proportion of the pennings. The market was weakest at opening with quotations ranging from 47/- to 57/- per 100 lb. Values subsequently improved and remained steady at 61/- to 63/- per 100 lb. for prime lines.

Pig supplies abnormally large.

Consignments of pigs during December, 1944, were abnormally heavy, numbers submitted at auction for the three sale days totalling 9,290 head, of which 6,853 arrived by rail. Sales by private treaty accounted for an additional 1,059 head.

From the point of view of pig meat available, it was an all-time record, as the average weight of pigs now coming forward is much higher than in former years when porkers comprised the bulk of the pennings.

Values of baconers maintained.

All weight grades of baconers were well represented except extra heavy descriptions at the closing sale. Quality ranged chiefly from fair to good trade. Compared with the rates of the previous month, heavy baconers were a little dearer and lighter descriptions slightly cheaper. Fluctuations in values from sale day to sale day were not material although the market often displayed a very irregular tendency during the progress of the auctions. Prices of good to prime descriptions dressing 100 to 200 lb. ranged from £3.8.6 to £7.8.6 per head, or chiefly from 8½d to 9½d on a per lb. basis.

Backfatters in light supply.

Backfatters were mostly in short supply, especially prime heavy lines. Prices fluctuated somewhat but average rates showed a slight improvement on those of November. The market was strongest at closing when quotations for both light and heavy sorts ranged to 6½d per lb. The highest price noted per head was £13.10.6.

Strong demand for light stores.

Moderate numbers of porkers were forward, pennings comprising all weight grades, although light pigs were in very short supply on the final sale day. Demand was variable but suitable store pigs generally were in strong request at prices ranging to 13¹/₂d per lb. Other descriptions were worth from 7³/₄d per lb.

(G.C. Coleman and
J.R. Williams).

ALEXANDRIA RAILWAY GOODS YARD
AND SUSSEX STREET SALES.

Potatoes much scarcer.

At Alexandria Goods Yard there was considerable reduction in the quantity of potatoes which came to hand, only 12,493 bags being received from various Coastal areas. The tubers opened up in a very good condition and the bulk was available for general trading. There were 1,497 bags of Carmans received from Victoria but these were taken over for essential services.

Tasmanian consignments received in Sussex Street also showed a considerable falling-off, only 3,559 bags arriving compared with 27,439 bags in November. These supplies consisted of Brownells, Bismarcks, Snowflakes and Up-to-Date.

Consignments totalling 46,519 bags of Delawares were received in Sussex Street from Western Australia. Only portion of these supplies was made available for general trading. Consignments from the North Coast received at Darling Harbour were limited to 3 trucks of new grade Factors and Chats in addition to 521 bags.

Rates for the month were unchanged as follows:- Wholesalers' prices to retailers, local and interstate New and No.1 grade £7.17.6, Nos. 2 and 3 grades £7.5.0; Chats £6 per ton. Primary merchants' rates to wholesalers are £1.5.0 per ton less than figures quoted.

Swedes in short supply.

The only consignment of swedes consisted of 25 bags from local centres which reached Alexandria, for which no rates were disclosed.

Increased supplies of pumpkins from Queensland.

Pumpkins received from Queensland amounted to 71 trucks. A number of lots arrived in faulty condition and it was necessary to regrade same. Demand continued to be very good owing to limited supplies of other lines of vegetables and rates remained firm.

A few sales were made at £19 but the bulk of supplies realised £20.0.0 to £22.10.0 per ton. There were 13 trucks from Queensland at Darling Harbour landing which brought approximately £22.10.0 per ton.

Onions scarce - supplies rationed.

Arrivals of Queensland table onions declined sharply, only 1,341 bags coming to hand. Demand was very keen and supplies were rationed out to various buyers at approximately £21 per ton. Local supplies were also very light and comprised 120 bags which were also disposed of at £21 per ton.

Oaten chaff supplies the lightest for many years.

Consignments of oaten chaff continued to show a considerable falling-off, only 26 trucks coming to hand. All lines were eagerly sought, clearances being made at the ceiling rate of £10.5.0 per ton.

Supplies of wheaten chaff increase.

There was an improvement in stocks of wheaten chaff, supplies amounting to 47 trucks. However, these quantities were not sufficient to meet requirements owing to the shortage of oaten chaff and ready sales were effected at the maximum rate of £10.5.0 per ton.

Lucerne chaff in demand.

There was a continued scarcity of lucerne chaff, only 22½ trucks being offered. Most lines met with keen enquiry, the bulk being disposed of at £13.10.0 per ton.

Lucerne hay in shorter supply.

Consignments of lucerne hay from the Maitland district, which has previously been the main source of supplies, showed a marked decline, only 74 trucks arriving. These stocks were not nearly sufficient to meet requirements and most lines were rationed to buyers. Clearances of new green lines were made early in the month at £10.10.0 to £11.0.0 and later £10.0.0 to £12.0.0 per ton was secured. Only 38½ trucks were to hand from other centres and all grades brought £12.10.0 per ton.

Oaten and wheaten hay in request.

Arrivals of derrick-pressed oaten and wheaten hay amounted to 96 trucks. Supplies were not sufficient to fulfil requirements and clearances were made at the maximum of £9.0.0 per ton.

Good demand for straw.

Supplies of straw showed a marked improvement, a total of 71 trucks being at rail. Oaten and wheaten were in demand, the bulk consisting of prime lots which brought £7.10.0 per ton. Rice straw sold at £5.10.0 to £6.10.0 per ton.

Receipts of wheat again restricted.

Arrivals of wheat at Alexandria aggregated 29 trucks, which sold at rates ranging from 3/4¹/₂d to 3/8d per bushel.

Maize not available for general trading.

At Alexandria, maize supplies again showed a considerable falling-off and totalled only 1,840 bags. The bulk was taken to store and no rates were disclosed.

Oats in light supply.

There were 15 trucks received but no prices were disclosed.

(C.H. Ferry).

The Federal Deputy Commissioner of Taxation has advised that fodder forms part of the trading stock of a primary producer and it is necessary to bring the value of fodder on hand into account each year for income tax purposes.

The fodder may be brought to account at cost price, market selling value or the price at which it can be replaced. If it is brought to account at cost price no tax is payable thereon. If the fodder is purchased, a deduction is allowed for the purchase price and the amount of the purchase price is the value of the stock on hand if valued at cost and none has been used. Where the fodder is grown by the taxpayer himself, the cost price is the cost of production, i.e., the proportion of wages, etc., incurred in connection with sowing and harvesting.

Fodder used in feeding of stock is automatically allowed as a deduction in the year in which so used because of the reduced value at the end of the year. For instance, assuming a primary producer has on hand at the end of one year fodder, which cost him £200 to produce, the value of £200 returned as income would be offset by the £200 allowed by way of deductions. The value of trading stock brought to account at the end of the year is allowable as a deduction in the succeeding year, and if some of the fodder is used in that succeeding year a reduced value would be shown at the end of that year.