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SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY

July, 1946.

SHEEP.

Increased Numbers Yarded.

An improvement in supplies was noticeable during July, offerings totalling 317,720 or about 31,000 head more than the previous month. Pennings for the corresponding period in 1945 amounted to 304,302 head. The high prices ruling and the prevailing dry conditions in many parts of the State contributed materially towards the heavier marketing of sheep and lambs.

Moderate Offerings of Prime Grade.

The general quality of the wethers and ewes auctioned was not up to the standard of the previous month, despite an aggregate yarding of 183,427 head. Medium trade sheep were well in evidence, while on occasions plain sorts were fairly plentiful. Good to prime grades were included in moderate numbers only and comprised chiefly heavy descriptions.

Higher Prices Rule.

Values showed some variation over the period but generally they were higher than in June. Early sales were marked by an upward price trend which continued until about mid-July, the average advance being 2s. to 4s. per head and more in some instances. Rates for good quality sheep remained steady until the end of the period, when a decline occurred, plain to medium classes of sheep being most affected. Prime heavy wethers, which sold to 6d. per lb. last month, reached 6½d. per lb. but for the most part were worth from 5d. to 6¼d. per lb. Light wethers made to 7d. per lb. compared with 6d. in July, but generally operators paid from 5¼d. to 6½d. Heavy ewes mostly cost from ¼d. to ½d. per lb. more, sales being effected at 4¼d. to 5¼d. per lb. with light ewes realising 4¾d. to 5½d. and at times 5¾d. per lb.

The skin market showed a further upward movement and best full-woolled skins made to 21d. per lb. Prices, however, did not hold and by the end of the period had declined by 1d. to 2d. per lb.

Prime heavy wethers sold to 58s. and in many instances sales were effected at from 50s. to 55s. Good quality full-woolled ewes made 50s. each, with other prime lots selling from 40s. to 45s. Skin values in many places exceeded 20s. per skin.

Lambs in Heavier Supply.

Lambs were more plentiful, 134,293 head being yarded, or 14,000 more than was offered in the previous month. Good to prime heavy grades made a very satisfactory showing, but the light grades available ranged from medium to good trade quality. Increased numbers of suckers were penned and although at times medium grades were noticeable, a large proportion was good to prime and some lots were of outstanding quality.

High Prices Rule.

A keen inquiry was manifest for all good quality lambs and suckers and high prices generally ruled. Early in the period rates advanced and by mid-July were from 2s. to 3s. per head, and in places more, above those ruling at opening sales. The market showed little material change over the remainder of the month, although a fall in skin values was reflected in realisations at the closing auctions. Rates for the plain to medium grades also were lower at the end of the period, this type showing a greater decline than the other classes offering.

On an average, heavy lambs cost from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $\frac{3}{4}$ d. more than in June, disposals mostly being made at from $8\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 10d. per lb. Good light lambs realised from $9\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $10\frac{3}{4}$ d., an increase of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb. Suckers generally were disposed of at from $10\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 11d. per lb. for good to prime with others at from $9\frac{3}{4}$ d. to $10\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. In a number of cases, prime heavy lambs sold at prices ranging from 50s. to 54s. while many sales were effected at from 40s. to 48s. per head. Rates for lamb skins reached 18d. per lb.

CATTLE.**Substantial Supplies Available.**

Numbers of cattle penned during July were well maintained and totalled 22,759 head, including 3,246 auctioned in the store section.

Quality varied considerably. Generally the standard was fairly good, but not quite up to the average of the previous month. The proportion of grown stock was rather small.

Steady Market for Bullocks.

Bullocks were in fairly light supply and comprised chiefly light and medium weight drafts of mainly good trade quality, with occasional prime lots.

Values at the beginning of the month were equal to those ruling at the end of June. The keen demand for the small numbers available resulted in gradually increasing prices being paid, and the market closed with light and medium weight grades moving out at 50s. to 55s. and heavy bullocks at 49s. to 54s. per 100 lb.

Steers Firm to Dearer.

Supplies of steers were well maintained, most grades of weight and quality being included, although light and medium weight lots of fair to good trade standard predominated. There was a small showing of prime and weighty steers at times.

Values showed a progressive increase and at the close of the month good quality medium and heavyweight lines realised to 59s. Plainer stock were in fair demand and the lowest prices offered were raised to 50s. per 100 lb.

Moderate Supplies of Cows.

Cows were in moderate supply only and consisted for the most part of light-weight types of fair trade quality only, with a sprinkling at times of heavier and prime animals.

No doubt due to the scarcity of heavy bullocks, weighty cows met with a strong demand, whilst all other grades were also sought after. Values showed a gradual increase and at the close of the month both heavy and light grades were quoted at 40s. to 46s. per 100 lb.

Heifers in Light Supply.

Supplies of heifers were only fair and mainly comprised light and medium weight lots of fair trade standard, with odd lots of prime. Values for the first half of the month were fairly steady, but subsequently an irregular tendency was noticeable, followed by a progressive increase towards the close of July, when realisations ranged from 44s. to 54s. per 100 lb.

Vealers Decline in Numbers.

Numbers of vealers penned showed a slight decrease, although all grades of weight and quality continued to be represented, with prime descriptions fairly scarce.

Rates for plainer types showed an irregular tendency but good quality lines realised progressively increasing prices. Rates at the end of the month were from 54s. to 68s. per 100 lb.

PIGS.**Supplies Increase Materially.**

The number of pigs available showed a sharp increase during the early part of the month, but the yardings were considerably lighter by the end of the period. Despite the falling off, however, the total of 8,854 penned, including 5,612 received by rail, represented an increase of 2,793 head on the previous month's total.

Strong Demand for Baconers.

Baconers were well supplied and formed a substantial proportion of the yardings, and while all grades of weight were available heavy to extra heavy grades made an improved showing. The general standard of quality was fairly good, useful to good trade pigs being well supplied.

The market at times showed some variation but the improved prices ruling at the close of the previous month generally was well maintained for most descriptions, with extra-heavy grades showing some improvement. Light weight pigs at times were a little easier but generally prices were reasonably steady. Demand at all times was good for all classes and light baconers made to $9\frac{3}{4}$ d., medium to heavy grades $9\frac{5}{8}$ d. and extra heavy to $9\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. Many lots of baconers exceeded £7 per head, while up to £7 17s. 10d. per head was obtained.

Moderate Offering of Backfatters.

The offering of backfatters was only moderate, with fair to good trade, light to medium weights comprising a material proportion of the supplies. Early in the month, good to prime heavy weights were in short supply but towards the close of the period this class of pig was more in evidence.

Values were a little higher at the opening sales, and subsequently the market remained firm until the closing auctions, when lower values ruled, due chiefly to increased supplies. Good quality light-weights realised to 7d. per lb. and heavy to $6\frac{3}{4}$ d. or about $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. above the highest price ruling in June. On a "per head" basis, the highest price obtained was £13 6s. od.

Market for Stores Very Irregular.

Porkers and suitable store pigs were fairly well represented throughout but on occasions many lots were offered which were not suited to the requirements of buyers of this class. Considerable variation was apparent in the market with values showing a downward trend until mid-July, when demand was restricted, many lines being difficult to sell at relatively low rates. A much stronger demand subsequently ruled and values improved considerably, $13\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb. being obtained for good quality stores compared with $11\frac{1}{4}$ d. at early sales and $9\frac{3}{4}$ d. when prices were lowest. Porkers at times made only $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.

G. COLEMAN and D. MCGREGOR.
