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10. That a new form of Agreement between "Australian Egg Equalisation Committee Limited" and the Boards be drafted in consultation with the Victorian Board's solicitors with regard to all of the resolutions of this conference.

Conference considered that by following the procedure outlined in the above resolutions, the same end result would be achieved as under the original Company scheme without creating difficulties in so far as the functions discharged by Egg Boards operating under the respective State Marketing Acts.

The essence of the new plan is that each Board will be free to act as a principal in the marketing of eggs in shell for immediate local consumption, acting only as agent for the Equalisation Committee (on which each Board will be represented) in collecting the equalisation charge and in handling surplus eggs, all of which are to be purchased by the Committee.

Doubtless a further conference on the subject will be called in the near future so that the opinions of the Commonwealth Government, State Departments and all Egg Marketing Boards might be discussed.

H.J.H.

SELLING COMMISSION ON PIGS.

BY

J. R. WILLIAMS.

Marketing Branch.

The rate of commission charged by agents in respect of sales of pigs has recently been the subject of discussion amongst pig raisers, and it is of interest in this connection to draw attention to the commission rates which apply in the case of livestock other than pigs—*viz.*, cattle, sheep, stud and dairy stock; and to outline briefly some aspects of marketing having a bearing on the subject.

Rates of commission charged by livestock agents are not prescribed by statute or regulation. Operations of stock agents are governed by the provisions of the Auctioneers, Stock and Station and Real Estate Agents' Act, administered by the Department of Justice, but rates of commission are fixed by agreement amongst the respective associations of agents, such as the Stock and Station Agents' Association of New South Wales and the Associated Smallstock Salesmen's Association. Charges agreed upon are regarded as minimum rates and action would be taken by an association to discipline any member charging less. By practice the minimum rate has become the maximum.

The general scale of charges is: cattle and sheep at Homebush $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; cattle and sheep in country areas $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., but up to 5 per cent. in parts of the Riverina; stud and dairy stock 5 per cent., and pigs 5 per cent. It is understood that, by

special arrangement, the rate of commission charged on certain classes of pigs in some parts of the North Coast, also in the Tamworth district, is less than 5 per cent.

The commission charge of 5 per cent. on the sale of pigs is in accordance with the rules of the Associated Smallstock Salesmen's Association and has been in operation for a lengthy period. Compared with charges made for selling other types of stock or farm produce, 5 per cent. commission would appear to be a reasonable rate under normal conditions when the bulk of the pigs at an auction sale would probably comprise porkers valued, at times, at only 20s. to 40s. per head, and having in mind that pigs are fairly troublesome subjects to handle. For some time now, however, the position has altered considerably in that, in accordance with the Federal Government's plan, yardings consist chiefly of heavy baconers which sell at rates well above the average pre-war market value. Furthermore, selling is a comparatively easy task under present circumstances when the demand usually exceeds the supply and buying is more or less on a quota basis. Consequently, in the opinion of some pig raisers, the rate of commission should be reduced, and several moves have been made of late by producers with the view to securing a reduction of the 5 per cent. rate, but at a recent meeting the selling agents concerned decided not to make any change. It is contended by agents that the present marketing position is possibly only a temporary one, caused by the abnormal demand and shortages of feedstuffs for stock, which is affecting production, and that sooner or later the average weight of pigs marketed will be reduced considerably while the present prices for baconers are unlikely to be maintained indefinitely. Selling agents maintain that requests for a reduction are being received chiefly from persons new to the industry who are not aware of previously existing conditions of marketing under which producers, apparently, were satisfied with the 5 per cent. charge.

It might here be pointed out that producers are not obliged to market their pigs through agents. They can sell by private treaty or, under the provisions of the Pig Meat Plan at present in operation, consign direct to abattoirs and receive payment on a weight and grade basis in accordance with schedule rates. Co-operative marketing is also an alternative.

It is interesting to note that pig producers are now united under the Australian Stud and Commercial Pig Breeders' Society and that organisation of the Sydney metropolitan producers at least was undertaken particularly for the purpose of securing a reduction in the selling commission rate. A deputation from the New South Wales branch recently asked the Associated Small Stock Salesmen's Association to give further consideration to the question of reducing the selling rate on pigs and the matter has been referred back to the agents. The Society has not yet decided upon its next course of action if the agents again decline to reduce their commission charge.