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A move was made by the Division to discuss with an officer of the Cumberland County Council the question of a new site for the central fruit and vegetable markets. It was thought that survey work might be initiated as a necessary preliminary to the solution of alternate sites.

At a meeting of the Markets Advisory Committee a motion was carried that the Premier be asked to convene a conference of those interested to discuss the question of the removal of the fruit and vegetable markets to a more commodious site.

The Markets Advisory Service recently established by this Division involves the daily inspection of fruit and vegetable produce as it arrives at the City Markets, and the despatch of telegrams to growers advising as to condition of the packs and suggesting changes considered necessary to improve realisations. In regard to interstate arrivals, a weekly schedule is forwarded to the Department of Agriculture concerned so that appropriate advice might then be given to the growers involved. Officials of the Queensland Department have recently alluded to the value of this service which enables the Department to contact Queensland growers in regard to the question of improving packs.

In common with other cereals, oat crops this season suffered severely from drought conditions which have prevailed over the greater part of the producing areas of New South Wales, and the yield of grain and hay is expected to be very light and considerably below last year's total of 9,997,000 bushels of grain and 353,000 tons of oaten hay. Based on reports received from agricultural instructors and grower-correspondents as to conditions existent at 25th October, 1946, the Division anticipates the yield of oat grain to approximate 1,900,000 bushels whilst the quantity of oaten hay should not exceed 100,000 tons.

SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY.

October, 1946.

SHEEP.

Supplies Improve.

Some improvement occurred in the numbers of sheep and lambs available when supplies amounted to 292,319 head, representing an increase of about 32,000 head on the previous month's total. On one sale day, the yarding was the heaviest for some time, while the aggregate for the month was approximately 16,000 head higher than for the corresponding period of 1945. Owing to the completion of shearing in many districts, numbers available in the future are expected to improve.

Prime Sheep Scarce.

Increased numbers of sheep were penned, a total of 141,847 head being offered. Suitable light trade wethers and ewes were well in evidence, although on occasions plain to medium grades, showing the effects of prevailing dry conditions, were in fairly heavy supply. Good to prime heavy wethers, for the most part, were fairly scarce, but some particularly good quality drafts were submitted. Good quality heavy ewes were, however, much more in evidence. Only odd consignments of woolly sheep were offered, shorn descriptions comprising the bulk of the yardings.

Lower Rates for Mutton.

The sheep market showed a good deal of irregularity and rates generally were not equal to those ruling during September. At the opening sales, values were maintained at the high levels ruling at the close of the previous month, but owing to the very heavy supplies at the following auctions, rates declined sharply and sheep generally were from 2s. to 4s. per head cheaper. Some fluctuation occurred in realisations, subsequently, but at the closing sale prices showed some improvement, an increase of up to 1s. per head being evident. Good heavy wethers made to 7¼d. and light to 7½d. per lb., but generally heavy sorts were worth from 5d. to 6¼d. and light 5¼d. to 6½d. per lb. A consignment of prime heavy full woolled wethers sold to 59s. per head, while others made 49s. each. Good quality shorn wethers sold at from 24s. to 36s. each, with other grades at relatively lower levels. Best heavy ewe mutton cost up to 6d. and light 6¼d. per lb., but operators mostly paid 4¼d. to 5d. and 4½d. to 5¼d. for heavy and light grades, respectively. Some woolly ewes realised 39s. per head, with others at from 32s. to 35s. each. Shorn ewes, however, made from 20s. to 27s. per head according to weight. On some occasions the shortage of good quality wethers resulted in much freer competition for ewes, tending materially to improve realisations.

More Lambs Available.

The number of lambs and suckers available showed an increase of about 10,000 head on the previous month's total, supplies amounting to 150,472 head, suckers being well represented. Medium and good useful light trade descriptions were well in evidence, with a fair proportion of plain light grades also included. Good to prime heavy drafts were offered on occasions, some particularly attractive lots being submitted.

Lamb Mostly Cheaper.

Although the opening sales were marked by a further increase of 1s. per head on lambs and suckers, competition at the following auctions was not so keen and rates were from 2s. to 4s. per head lower. Some variation in realisations occurred over the remainder of the month, and, while rates improved at the close of the month's operations, the sharp decline experienced earlier was not fully recovered and the average cost of lamb was lower than in September. At times, good to prime light grades were worth from 10d. to 11¼d. per lb., but mostly operators paid

from 9d. to 10½d. per lb. Heavy lambs and suckers on occasions cost from 9¼d. to 11d. per lb., but for the most part rates ranged from 8½d. to 10d. per lb. Hoggets were in comparatively short supply and while up to 8½d. per lb. was realised the carcase cost usually ranged from 6¾d. to 8d. per lb.

Some of the best drafts of heavy lambs offered made from 48s. to 51s. per head with others making from 32s. to 46s. each. Plainer grades were disposed of at relatively lower levels.

G. COLEMAN.

CATTLE.

Supplies Again Smaller.

Although no sale was held on 7th October (Six Hour Holiday) the total offering of 16,399 head was only slightly smaller than the September figure. Cattle on offer in the store section totalled 2,925 head which represented a small increase on the previous month.

Quality generally showed a marked improvement, prime and heavy drafts being more in evidence, with a very noticeable decrease in the proportion of light types of only fair quality.

Good Showing of Bullocks.

Bullocks were more heavily supplied than for some months and included a few prime drafts, which were the heaviest animals offered for a considerable time. Light and medium weights of fair to good trade standard were fairly well represented, and prime lots of this type were scarce.

Opening sales were at slightly lower rates than September's closing quotations. Disposals during the month were effected at steadily decreasing values, and at closing rates ranged from 50s. to 63s. per 100 lb.

Steers Well Supplied.

Light and medium weights of fair to good trade standard again comprised a substantial proportion of the offerings, which included most grades of weight and quality. At times a few prime heavy drafts were available and, on the closing day, prime light descriptions made a very fair showing.

As with bullocks, early rates were below those operating at the end of the previous month, and values progressively declined to 55s. to 64s. on the second last sale day. The particularly good yarding of light stock on 31st October resulted in higher prices being offered, and closing quotations were at the rate of 58s. to 68s. per 100 lb.

Moderate Supplies of Cows.

Although cows were in short supply, a small proportion of prime and very heavy animals was available each sale day. Quality generally was fair to good trade, with light and medium weights comprising the bulk of the offering.

Opening rates were at the same level as September's closing quotes. Heavy lines were cheaper early in the month at 47s. to 51s., and remained firm at that figure for the balance of the period. Values of light cows also declined during the second week, and were further reduced during following sales, but then firmed, to close at 47s. to 57s. per 100 lb.

Heifers Scarce.

The small number of heifers yarded comprised mostly light and medium weights of fair to good trade standard and included a few prime and heavy drafts.

Values at opening were the same as those prevailing at the close of the previous month. Subsequent sales were variable, but generally they displayed a weaker tendency, although at the final auctions, rates improved following the keen demand for good quality light stock and ranged from 58s. to 71s. per 100 lb.

Prime Vealers in Demand.

Vealers made a fairly satisfactory showing, light and medium weights of fair to good trade standard being well represented. Prime drafts were rather scarce.

Although the highest rates of the previous month were realised at opening sales, values showed a decline towards the middle of the month, but then firmed, 66s. to 78s. per 100 lb. being obtained at closing.

D. MCGREGOR.

PIGS.

Increased Numbers Yarded.

The number of pigs yarded showed a substantial increase on the previous month's total, 10,233 head, including 5,874 received by rail, being offered for sale. This represented an increase of 1,883 head on the previous month's aggregate and was considerably higher than the total of 6,274 head submitted during the corresponding period last year.

Values of Baconers Reach High Levels.

Baconers comprised a good proportion of the available supplies of pigs and mostly were of fair to good trade quality with a fair showing of prime grades. Heavy to extra heavy grades were well represented while fair numbers of light to medium weights were also included. A particularly keen inquiry prevailed, and, although some fluctuation in values occurred, rates for good to prime grades reached the highest levels for many years. At the early sales, rates for all classes of baconers advanced, although later sales were marked by generally lower values, but before the end of the period a further improvement in prices occurred. Rates, however, were not fully maintained at the closing auctions, most classes being cheaper. The average cost per lb. for baconers was higher than in September, light weight descriptions making to 12¼d. per lb. and medium and heavy weights 11½d. Extra

heavy baconers—over 200 lb.—realised to 10d. per lb. Sales in the vicinity of £8 to £8 10s. per head were frequently made, while up to £9 12s. 6d. was realised for good quality extra heavy pigs.

Moderate Offering of Backfatters.

Only moderate numbers of backfatters were yarded, light to medium weights of fair to good trade quality comprising a good proportion of the supply. Some drafts of prime heavy grades were offered, but, generally, pennings of this class of pig were light. Demand for good quality backfatters was strong for the greater part of the month but on occasions values were a little easier. At times boars were in fairly heavy supply and lower rates were evident, more particularly at the closing auctions. Values of backfatters, with the exception of boars, generally were higher than those prevailing during the previous month, heavy grades over 350 lb. making to 8¼d. and lighter weights up to 350 lb., being disposed of to 8½d. per lb. On a per head basis up to £16 16s. was obtained for prime heavy descriptions.

High Rates for Porkers.

The supply of good quality porkers was relatively light and not sufficient to meet the full requirements of the pork trade, and values throughout remained at a consistently high level. Rates at times, however, showed some fluctuation but for the most part were higher than those prevailing in September. Light porkers made to 14¼d. and medium to heavy grades 14d. per lb., while sales were made to £4 19s. 6d. per head.

Fair numbers of suitable store pigs were available during the period and values were well maintained at the previous month's levels. On one occasion, however, plain light stores were numerous, and, owing to the inferior quality, values were adversely affected.

G. COLEMAN.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

October, 1946.

FRUIT.

Small Valencia Oranges Plentiful.

The packing of a large number of Valencia oranges for export to the East and Japan about the third week of October caused a temporary shortage of supplies on the local market. Generally, however, this fruit was well stocked. Medium and small sizes comprised the bulk of supplies and comparatively low rates were accepted to clear these grades. Counts of 96 to 125 were rather scarce and choice packs of these commanded prices mostly ranging from 16s. to 18s. per bushel case; 20s. and 22s. was paid throughout the week ending Friday, 18th October.

Marketing of Navel oranges ceased during this month.