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**SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY.****February, 1947.****SHEEP.****Supplies increase.**

Compared with the previous month's aggregate, the number of sheep and lambs available showed an increase of approximately 11,000 head, yardings for the period amounting to 210,621. Although early in the month supplies were in the vicinity of 40,000 head on each sale day, pennings later declined appreciably, following on the good falls of rain in many parts of the State.

**Prime Sheep Scarce.**

Prime sheep continued in relatively short supply although on occasions drafts of prime heavy wethers and ewes were available. Numbers on offer totalled 127,566 head with good useful trade descriptions well represented. Plain to medium grade also comprised a fair proportion of the offerings. It is anticipated, however, that with a general improvement in pastures following the recent beneficial rains, the quality of the sheep generally should show a marked improvement, although it is doubtful whether there will be any appreciable increase in the numbers marketed, due primarily to the necessity for restocking on many properties.

**Strong Demand for Mutton.**

The market throughout was particularly strong for practically all classes of sheep, rates for mutton showing a marked increase, and at closing sales were from 1¼d. to 2d. per lb. higher than at the early auctions. Rates for sheep advanced 1s. to 2s. per head at the commencement of the period but remained fairly steady until the second week. As the result of rain in the country, supplies declined appreciably, giving a strong stimulus to prices generally, rates advancing by from 3s. to 8s. per head, realisations at the closing auctions reaching high levels. Early in the period operators paid from 5½d. to 6d. per lb. for heavy wethers and 5½d. to 6¼d. for light grades, but owing to the general increase, rates for heavy wethers advanced to 6¾d. to 8d. and light 7d. to 8d. by the end of the month. Some exceptionally good prices were obtained for wethers, prime heavy grades making to 58s. per head, while on a number of occasions sales were made at from 48s. to 56s. each. Good trade descriptions for the most part realised from 29s. to 46s. per head. Good heavy ewes were secured at from 4¼d. to 4¾d. per lb. and light weights at from 4½d. to 5¼d. at the opening sales, but by the end of the month values had reached 5½d. to 6½d. and 5¾d. to 7d. for heavy and light-weights respectively. Some prime weighty ewes were disposed of at 41s. per head, while prices ranging from 34s. to 39s. each frequently were obtained. Good quality light ewes mostly sold at from 24s. to 36s. per head.

**Heavier Pennings of Lambs.**

Lambs were in heavier supply, the yarding for the month total-ling 83,055 head, although there was a marked falling off in pennings following the general rains. Quality for the most part showed some improvement, fewer plain light grades being included. Prime light descriptions were comparatively scarce, although fair numbers of medium to good light trade sorts were on offer. Good to prime heavy lambs on occasions made a satisfactory showing, some very good quality drafts being available.

**Higher Prices for Lambs.**

Rates for practically all classes of lambs showed a strong upward trend as on a number of occasions, particularly during the latter half of the month, numbers offering were not sufficient for trade requirements and as the result of very keen competition rates advanced considerably. Opening sales were from 1s. to 2s. per head dearer, but subsequently values further improved by from 5s. to 8s. per head and more in some places. The average cost of lamb at the close of the period was from  $1\frac{1}{4}$ d. to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. higher than at the opening sales, operators paying from  $10\frac{3}{4}$ d. to  $12\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. for heavy lambs and  $11\frac{1}{4}$ d. to  $12\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb. for light grades.

On many occasions prices reached very high levels, prime heavy lambs realising to 60s. per head, the highest obtained for some considerable time. Sales at prices ranging from 48s. to 55s. per head were also recorded, while other drafts of good-quality lambs made from 34s. to 46s. each.

The offering of hoggets was relatively light, available supplies meeting with a very keen inquiry at advanced rates. Although values ranged from 7d. to 8d. per lb. at early sales, the cost of hogget carcasses subsequently was higher and over the latter half of the month were worth from 9d. to 10d. per lb.

G. COLEMAN.

**CATTLE.****Substantial Supplies Yarded.**

Increased numbers of cattle were available, 15,612 head being yarded, including 3,211 offered for sale in the store stock section. This yarding was a little larger than that for the corresponding period of last year, when 14,768 head was penned.

The general standard of the offering was rather poor, fair trade stock comprising a large proportion of the number available. Some very fine prime drafts were in evidence at all sales, but only in limited quantities.

**Bullocks More Plentiful.**

Bullocks were more numerous than for some months, and were mainly fair to good trade medium-weight descriptions, with a fair sprinkling of heavy and prime drafts.

Rates at opening were irregular but mostly firm at the same level as January's closing quotations. Values increased progressively during February and final realisations for the period were from 60s. to 78s. per 100 lb.

**Steers Well Supplied.**

Steers were well represented at all sales, and consisted chiefly of fair to good light and medium weights, and included fair proportions of prime and weighty lots.

The market opened on a firm, although somewhat irregular basis, and values showed a steady increase as sales progressed, 66s. to 74s. per 100 lb. being obtained at closing auctions.

**Cows Fairly Scarce.**

Supplies of cows were rather light, and comprised mainly light and medium weights of fair to good trade standard. Heavy and prime drafts were very scarce.

For the first half of the period values were firm at February's closing rates. Prices showed a steady increase for the balance of the month and final quotations were 54s. to 62s. for heavy descriptions and 60s. to 70s. per 100 lb. for light cows.

**Heifers in Demand.**

Heifers were in short supply and mostly included fair to prime light and medium weights, heavy lines being very scarce. Prime light types met a strong demand.

A firm market ruled during the first few sale days, followed by a progressive improvement in values, realisations at final auctions being 65s. to 73s. per 100 lb.

**Vealers in Light Supply.**

Supplies of vealers were relatively small and comprised mainly light and medium weights of fair to good trade standard with a fair proportion of prime drafts. Heavy grades were very scarce.

The closing values of the previous month prevailed during the first half of February, but following a steady increase subsequently realisations at closing ranged from 74s. to 80s. per 100 lb.

D. MCGREGOR.

**PIGS.****Supply Position Improves.**

With the return to normal slaughtering at the Homebush Abattoir, the supply position showed considerable improvement, the number of pigs yarded being substantially higher than the previous month's aggregate. Pennings for the period totalled 6,995 head, including 3,513 received by rail, principally from the country districts of the State. The number of pigs available, however, showed a marked decline when compared with the total of 9,175 head auctioned during the corresponding month last year.

**Higher Prices for Baconers.**

As bacon curers and other operators were particularly short of supplies, the increase in the numbers yarded was readily absorbed by the trade. Inquiry was generally keen for the good representation of heavy to extra heavy grades of baconers but, on occasions, the demand for the moderate numbers of good trade

light to medium weight pigs was not quite so strong. Generally, however, realisations for all good quality pigs were higher than those obtained last month. At the opening sales, rates advanced for all classes, but later lighter descriptions showed an easier tendency. Values at the close of the period improved for all grades of weight, extra heavy weights selling particularly well. Light-weight baconers made from 9½d. to 12d., medium 9¾d. to 12d., heavy 10¼d. to 12d. and extra heavy 10½d. to 12d. per lb., while up to 11d. per lb. was obtained for pigs in the 200-240 lb. grade. Prime extra-heavy grades sold to £9 19s. 6d. per head while other weights realised from £4 7s. 6d. per head.

#### **Rates Improved for Backfatters.**

The number of backfatters available showed an increase, boars on occasions being well in evidence. Good trade light to medium weights comprised a fair proportion of the offerings, while good to prime heavy descriptions also made a very satisfactory showing, some particularly good-quality lots being offered. A much better demand prevailed than during the previous month and rates showed a marked improvement, light weights estimated to weigh up to 350 lb. dressed making from 6¾d. to 8¾d. per lb., while heavy grades estimated to dress over 350 lb. made from 6d. to 8¾d. per lb., representing an increase of 1½d. per lb. on the best rates obtained during January. Prime weighty sorts sold to £17 13s., being the highest price obtained for some considerable time. Other grades of weight sold from £7 6s. per head, with some plainer sorts at relatively lower levels.

#### **Pork Prices Easier.**

Porkers made a fairly good showing and comprised chiefly medium to heavy grades of good trade quality, prime light sorts being in short supply. Most lots offering met with a good inquiry but the best rates ruling during January were not fully sustained, when up to 14¼d. per lb. was realised, compared with 13d. during February. The market showed some irregularity throughout and while rates at the opening sales were easier, excepting for odd lots of prime, the market at closing was somewhat better, particularly for the heavy grades of porkers. On a per head basis, up to £4 10s. 6d. was realised, while the cost of light-weight pork mostly ranged from 9d. to 12½d. per lb. with some lots of prime making 13d. Medium weights chiefly were worth from 10¼d. to 12d. and occasionally 12¾d., with heavy weights mostly being purchased at from 10¾d. to 12d. per lb.

Store pigs were in fairly heavy supply but prices did not vary appreciably.

G. COLEMAN.