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At an international conference in Sydney recently it was decided that U.N.R.R.A.'s South-west Pacific Area Office should establish an International Veterinary and Livestock Secretariat, with headquarters in Sydney.

As from January 1st, 1946, the Commonwealth Government will pass on to producers the increases in the price of certain classes of meat being paid by the British Ministry of Food. The average increases, in Australian currency, are ½d. per pound for veal and meat offals, and 5/8d. per pound for bull beef and beef shins.

The Commonwealth Government has announced a wheat stabilisation scheme guaranteeing 5s. 2d. a bushel f.o.b. for all wheat marketed in Australia and all f.a.q. wheat exported in the five seasons 1945-46 to 1949-50. When export prices are in excess of the guaranteed price, 60 per cent. of the excess will be paid into a stabilisation fund to assist meeting the guarantee when export prices are below it. A marketing organisation and a system of regulating production are also part of the scheme, and the co-operation of the States will now be sought to implement it.

The United States Government is preparing to cut back its \$1.8 billion a year wartime food subsidy programme. All payments are to cease in June, 1946. Retail prices are expected to rise in consequence; milk will rise by 1.3 cents per quart; bread 1 cent a loaf; cheese 4.8 cents a pound; pork 4.4 cents a pound; prunes 4.2 cents a pound; and flour 8.8 cents for 10 pounds.

SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY

December, 1945.

Sharp Decline in Sheep Numbers.

The number of sheep and lambs yarded showed a marked falling-off, supplies comprising 188,544 head, or approximately 105,000 less than the previous month. The Christmas holiday period reduced the number of selling days to seven, and this factor, in conjunction with the uncertain position in regard to electricity supplies and probable effect on slaughterings, tended materially to reduce consignments from country centres.

General Quality Satisfactory.

The general quality of the sheep offered was for the most part suitable for trade needs, medium to good light weight wethers and ewes being well represented. Good heavy ewes made a satisfactory showing, but on a number of occasions prime heavy wethers were relatively scarce. The offering of grown sheep totalled 108,346 head, or 48,000 less than the total forward last month.

Mutton Cheaper.

Early in the period rates for sheep were from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per head lower, and realisations showed a further decline about mid-December of from 2s. to 3s. per head. Subsequently, the market partially recovered, the improvement in values being approximately 1s. per head. The market for prime heavy wethers suitable for country orders did not fluctuate to any marked degree, values generally being fairly well maintained.

Best heavy wethers made from 4d. to 5d. per lb., but substantial numbers were disposed of at from 4d. to 4¾d. At times light wethers realised 5d. to 5¼d. per lb., but generally good trade sheep sold at 4¼d. to 4¾d. per lb. The cost of ewes did not vary to such an extent, heavy grades making 3d. to 3¾d. with some sales at 4d. to 4¼d. per lb. Light ewes generally brought from 3½d. to 4d. per lb., with some lots making 4¼d. to 4½d. per lb. Amongst the best prices realised were wethers selling to 31s. per head and ewes to 28s.

Light Yarding of Lambs.

Only a relatively light supply of lambs and suckers was available a total of 80,198 head was offered, or 57,000 less than in the previous month. A fairly large proportion of the yardings comprised medium to good trade descriptions, but plain dry lambs were also numerous. Prime light suckers continued in short supply but a moderate percentage of good weighty lambs was included. Many drafts of mixed lambs and hoggets were available over the period.

Prices Advance Appreciably.

The limited supply of lambs, coupled with a particularly strong demand, had a stimulating effect on prices generally, and realisations were considerably better than those of last month. Early in the month the market was reasonably steady, although medium quality lots were about 1s. to 1s. 6d. cheaper about the middle of the month. Towards the end of the period rates advanced sharply, increases of from 3s. to 4s. 6d. per head taking place.

Heavy lambs and suckers early in the month were worth 6¾d. to 7¾d. and light 7½d. to 8¼d. per lb., but by the close of the period operators were paying from 8¼d. to 9¼d. for heavy and from 9d. to 10d. a lb. for light grades. Comparable prices during November were 5¾d. to 7¾d. and 6½d. to 8¼d. per lb. for heavy and light grades, respectively.

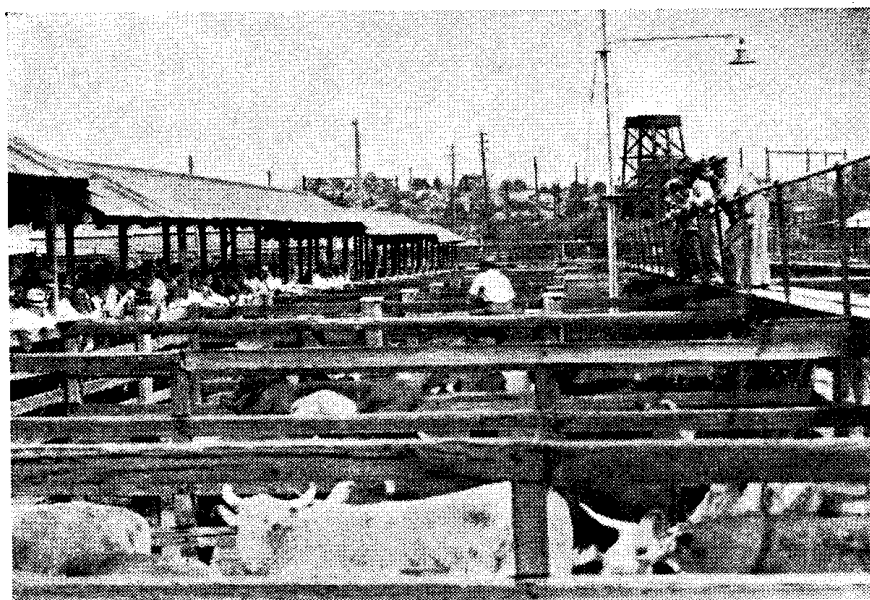
Many lots of good weighty lambs sold at from 30s. to 36s. per head, with good light descriptions making from 24s. to 28s.

Reduced Cattle Supplies.

Cattle supplies during December, 1945, were fairly well maintained, but there were only seven sale days, and consignments for the final auction of the year were lighter than usual. The monthly aggregate, as a consequence, showed some reduction, penning totalling 15,489 head, including 1,312 auctioned in the store section.

Consignments generally comprised all grades of weight and quality. Good trade stock were well represented on most occasions, but prime descriptions were lightly supplied, while a substantial proportion of the offerings consisted of medium to fair trade beasts. The percentage of grown cattle varied considerably and, on occasions, bullocks were somewhat scarce.

Moderate, and in places fairly heavy rain, was recorded over a wide area, but with high temperatures prevailing it was insufficient to promote substantial new growth, except in a few areas such as on parts of the Northern tableland. The position as regards dry feed, however, is mostly satisfactory. A notable exception was the Moree district, where pastures were failing at the close of the month.



Selling Cattle by Auction—Homebush Stockyards, near Sydney.

Bullocks Dearer.

Bullocks were mostly in moderate supply and comprised chiefly light and medium weights of fair to good trade standard. Heavy descriptions were noticed generally in odd lots only.

A stronger market was evident and values improved progressively after the first sale day, when light bullocks realised from 47s. to 50s. per 100 lb. During the final week rates reached as high as 57s. per 100 lb.

Steers Well Supplied.

Steers were plentiful throughout the period and the pennings included many good quality medium to heavy weight drafts. Fair trade lightweights, however, predominated.

Average rates were higher than those of November, and at closing quotations ranged from 50s. to 58s. per 100 lb.

Cows Fairly Plentiful.

Cows made a satisfactory showing, consignments including both light and heavy descriptions of generally fair to good trade quality.

Values recovered the fall of the previous month, and at closing the market was dearer, rates ranging from 40s. to 48s. per 100 lb.

Lightweight Heifers in Fair Supply.

Heifer consignments were variable but pennings were chiefly very fair, and mostly comprised good trade lightweights.

Values were lowest at opening, when from 43s. to 49s. per 100 lb. was paid. A steady but improved demand ruled subsequently until the final week, when prices rose sharply, equivalent rates being 48s. to 56s. per 100 lb.

Lightweight Vealers Scarce.

A moderate number of vealers was forward on most sale days. Offerings mostly comprised good trade medium weights. Prime lines and lightweights generally were relatively scarce.

The market was dearer with realisations ranging chiefly from 50s. to 60s. per 100 lb. In common with other classes of cattle, values rose towards the close. Rates exceeded 70s. per 100 lb. for odd lightweight lines, with the general range for good to prime grades 56s. to 65s.

Lighter Supplies of Pigs.

Yardings of pigs were again irregular, but on the whole supplies were lighter than during November. The total for the three sale days was 5,959 head, of which 3,982 were received by rail. An additional 800 were disposed of by private treaty. It is possible that the fear of slaughtering restrictions following power rationing was partly responsible for the lighter consignments.

Weaker Market for Baconers.

Except on the final sale day, baconers were well represented with all grades of weight available. However, numbers of extra heavy descriptions submitted (exceeding 200 lb.) were smaller than usual. Purchases for curing in time for the Christmas trade had ceased by December, and the market during the period was somewhat weaker, although prices were maintained at a relatively high level.

At opening, quotations ranged chiefly from 9d. to 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ d. per lb. Rates showed a further small decline on the following sale day but an improvement was noticeable at closing, when supplies were unusually light. Many lots on this occasion realised to 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., but 10d. per lb. was paid only for lightweights. On a per head basis, extra heavy baconers continued to realise high prices, up to £7 19s. 6d. being paid.

Backfatters Cheaper.

Supplies of backfatters were moderate, but fair to good trade lightweights formed the bulk of supplies, prime heavy descriptions being relatively scarce. Values showed a sharp decline at opening, when they ranged to 7d. per lb. The market subsequently improved slightly, but rates were again easier at closing. On a per head basis prices ranged to £17 9s. 6d.

Prime Porkers Scarce.

Porkers were well represented and included all grades of weight and quality. Prime descriptions were relatively scarce.

A strong demand continued to rule, 11d. to 14½d. per lb. being paid for lightweights and from 10d. to 12d. for heavy sorts.

G. C. COLEMAN AND J. R. WILLIAMS.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

December, 1945.

Good Inquiry for Fruit.

Demand generally was satisfactory for all varieties of fruit, and prices for good quality packs were maintained at "ceiling" levels for those lines under control. Furthermore, fairly high rates ruled for a number not subject to price fixing.

Cherries Sell Freely.

Marketing of cherries from the Young district was completed. The principal source of supply late in the month was Orange, with a few consignments from Batlow.

Request was satisfactory and values for the most part were above average, particularly for Margarets of choice quality, which realised 20s., while as much as 25s. was paid for some outstanding quality packs. Light varieties also sold well, and up to 16s. was realised. Factory lines sold from 6s. 6d. early in the month and from 7s. towards the close.

Most Peaches Sell at Maximum.

There was an active inquiry for peaches, which were in limited supply until late December. Values were very firm during the period of short supply, and the greater proportion of offerings realised the maximum of 20s. per half bushel. On Monday, 24th December, there was a substantial increase in the quantities on offer, and although £1 was paid early, the general selling rate was much lower subsequently, prices mainly ranging from 6s. to 15s. Heavy supplies were also forward on the closing markets, when values were weak, and clearances were not effected.