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As a result of the trend towards the production of fat lambs, fewer merino sheep are now being pastured in Australia than for many years. The quantity of merino wool grown this season is estimated to be 2,197,160 bales compared with 2,693,000 bales in 1938-39. By way of contrast the crossbred clip is likely to be about 693,840 bales compared with 590,000 bales in the last pre-war year.

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In the course of an address to the Annual Conference of the Wheatgrowers Union the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Graham, referred to the proposal to establish country killing works and asked producers of stock to co-operate by supporting their local slaughtering centre. He revealed that the building of 70 new refrigerated railway trucks was planned to aid food production.

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During the war, and particularly during 1944, mortgages and overdrafts of primary producers have been reduced by more than £60,000,000. Statistics show an increase in the income of primary producers in every range from £250 upwards. (Statement by Federal Attorney-General, Dr. Evatt.)

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Export wheat in Australia is now worth 10s. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a bushel bagged basis, on trucks at ports.

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In a message to a special Senate investigating committee the President of the United States, Mr. Truman, said that as a result of a careful review of the entire world wool problem it appears that it will be desirable, from a national viewpoint, to have the Government absorb losses on sales of domestic wool rather than raise additional trade barriers against imports. Foreign wool is at present underselling the American product after paying tariff duties. Executive agencies are now sounding out interested foreign Governments concerning their willingness to enter into an international agreement "to provide for a more unified supervision of world wool marketing and price policies."

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## **SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY**

**March, 1946.**

### **SHEEP.**

#### **Increased Numbers Yarded.**

Improved supplies of sheep and lambs were available during March, when the yarding increased by 54,119 head on the previous month's offering, to a total of 240,391 head. Despite this increase the supply of mutton and lamb was short of trade requirements. Some indication as to the supply position in the past is apparent in the five-year average March total for the period 1941 to 1945, which was 341,641 head.

**General Standard of Quality Good.**

The general standard of quality of the 150,459 sheep submitted was good, useful trade wethers and ewes comprising a substantial percentage of the penning. Good to prime heavy sheep, more particularly ewes, made a much better showing than of late, while the length of wool on the skins also improved. Some lines available carried good heavy skins.

**Mutton Cheaper.**

The sheep market showed considerable fluctuation, the incidence of supplies tending materially towards the variation in prices throughout the period. At the early auctions values were irregular although rates generally showed little material change. Later, however, a cheaper market ruled and by about the middle of the month sheep were from 2s. to 4s. per head lower. At this stage demand improved and values recovered 1s. to 2s. per head. Towards the close of the period rates for all sheep again declined 1s. per head, but at the final auctions this fall was fully recovered.

Good heavy wethers and ewes sold to 6¼d. and 5d. per lb. respectively, compared with 6¾d. and 5½d. per lb. in February. Generally, however, wethers cost from 5¼d. to 6d. per lb. but on a number of occasions operators paid from 5d. to 5¾d. Heavy ewes mostly made from 4¼d. to 5d. Good light wethers realised to 6¼d. and ewes 5½d. per lb. or ½d. per lb. less than the peak price of the previous month. For the most part light wether mutton was worth from 5½d. to 6d. but at times it was obtained for 5¼d. Good light ewes generally cost from 4½d. to 5¼d. with some as low as 4¼d. per lb.

Prices realised were mostly good and many lots of prime sheep exceeded 30s. per head, wethers making to 36s. and ewes 31s. per head.

**More Lambs Offered.**

Lambs made an improved showing, the yarding totalling 89,932 or about 32,000 more than was auctioned last month. Only occasional lots of prime light descriptions were included, the bulk of this grade of lamb offering ranging from medium to good trade quality. On the other hand, good to prime heavy grades, over 36 lb. dressed, were in much heavier supply, the penning including many attractive drafts.

**Good Demand Prevails.**

Although most classes of lambs met with a good demand, the best prices ruling during the previous month were not maintained and, as was the case with mutton, lamb generally was cheaper. Early in the period the market declined and rates were from 1s. to 3s. per head lower, while at subsequent sales a much easier tendency prevailed. Later, rates improved and by the end of March they had partially recovered the fall in values previously experienced.

Prime heavy lambs and suckers made to 9¾d. per lb. but mostly realised from 8d. to 9¼d. according to carcase weight. Similar grades sold to 10d. per lb. in February. Prime light descriptions

made to  $10\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. or  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. less than the previous month. For the most part, however, light grades were purchased at from 9d. to  $9\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb.

Hoggets continued to be in relatively short supply and although values were lower they did not decline to such an extent as the sheep and lambs and mostly ranged from  $6\frac{1}{2}$ d. to  $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.

Price per head continued at fairly high levels. Hoggets making to 35s. per head, while prices ranging from 30s. to 37s. per head were frequently paid for lambs with occasional sales to 41s. per head.

## CATTLE.

### Light Supplies Yarded.

Although cattle supplies showed an increase of 532 head on February's offering and totalled 16,855 head, the total number of fat stock available showed no appreciable change. Cattle on offer in the store section totalled 2,837, being 497 more than February's consignments.

### Quality Variable.

The standard of the offerings varied considerably from day to day and, at the final auctions, very few cattle of good trade standard were available. Prime stock were generally in short supply and small fair trade cattle comprised a large proportion of the yardings.

### Heavy Bullocks Scarce.

Few heavy bullocks were on offer and at the opening sales 56s. per 100 lb. was paid. Towards the close of the period rates weakened and sales were made at 52s. to 53s. Consignments of medium and light weights were moderate and comprised chiefly good trade descriptions. Prices rose from 50s. to 54s. at the commencement to a peak of 57s., but later eased. Towards the close, sales were effected at 49s. to 53s. per 100 lb. with odd lots to 55s.

### Light Steers Well Supplied.

The majority of steers coming forward were lightweights of fair to good trade standard and supplies throughout the month were considerably heavy.

Demand was keen for prime lots and up to 57s. per 100 lb. was realised. The market for other grades had an easier tendency and rates were lower at the close of the month, sales for these being made at 49s. to 53s. per 100 lb.

### Mixed Yardings of Cows.

Supplies of cows were generally moderate and all grades of weight and quality were submitted. Prime sorts, however, were available in odd drafts only.

A steady market ruled at opening with rates ranging from 45s. to 46s. per 100 lb. Subsequently values, however, were weaker and ranged from 38s. to 43s. per 100 lb.

**Lower Rates for Heifers.**

Heifers were fairly well supplied throughout the month but quality was variable. Values were easier and the high prices of the previous period were not maintained. Sales were made mainly at 44s. to 52s. per 100 lb. with prime lots at 54s.

**Vealers Sell Well.**

Demand for vealers continued to be firm but rates had an easier tendency due to the absence of prime lines. Good trade lots were well supplied and the market which opened at 54s. to 60s. closed at a similar level.

**PIGS.****Smaller Numbers Yarded.**

Supplies of pigs available on each sale day were variable and penningings were about 2,000 head below the previous month's total. Yardings for the period amounted to 6,989 of which 4,104 head were delivered ex rail. In addition to the pigs sold at auction 467 head were disposed of by private treaty.

**Strong Demand for Baconers.**

Baconers comprised a substantial proportion of the yardings and while all grades of weight were submitted, heavy to extra heavy descriptions were well represented. Quality chiefly was satisfactory, with medium to good trade lines well in evidence.

Demand generally was strong although request for the lighter type was not so active at the end of the month and values were lower. The average cost of pigs dressing over 200 lb. was a little higher than in the preceding month, the extra heavy types ranging from 200-240 lb. reaching 9¾d. per lb. Other grades of baconers sold to 10½d. per lb. but a large proportion made from 9¾d. to 10¼d. per lb. On a per head basis, prices ranged to £8 11s. od. per head.

**Backfatters Cheaper.**

Moderate numbers of backfatters were forward and although the general standard of quality was very fair to good, the supply of prime extra heavy grades was relatively light.

The best rates ruling during February were not fully sustained although a keen inquiry generally was evident. Operators paid to 7¼d. per lb. and up to £14 1s. od. per head was realised.

**Values of Porkers Lower.**

The strong demand which was evident during the previous month for porkers did not continue and generally lower values prevailed, more particularly at the closing auctions. Supplies, which were fairly heavy early, declined appreciably towards the end of the month while a fairly large proportion of this class of pig offered was only suitable for the needs of store buyers.

Prices ranged to 13¾d. per lb. for light descriptions as compared with 16¾d. in February, with heavy weights realising to 12d. per lb. or about ½d. per lb. below the best price ruling last month. Prices at closing were lower, light grade making to 12¾d. and heavy to 11½d. per lb.

G. COLEMAN AND B. G. O'CONNELL.

## FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

March, 1946.

### FRUIT.

#### Heavy Supplies of Apples.

Stocks of apples from local and Interstate sources continued to increase and there was a large accumulation of small sizes for which the demand was mostly dull. Average values were well below those of the previous month but the decline in prices was small when compared with February's closing quotations. Best prices were secured for Delicious from New South Wales centres which realised to 20s., specials higher, per case. Jonathans generally sold to 16s., but the bulk of the Tasmanian supplies brought from 5s. to 11s.

Towards the close of the month values for Granny Smiths showed an improvement when more mature packs became available.

#### Weak Demand for Ripe Pears.

Green lines of pears met a good demand throughout the month and rates were steady at 14s. to 16s. for best lots of Williams and Packhams from local and Interstate sources. Many lines of Williams ripened quickly on the selling floors and clearances had to be effected to the best advantage, as low as 2s. 6d. was accepted for some packs. The season for New South Wales Williams pears had practically ended by the close of the month, only isolated lots in cool stores remained to be sold. Other varieties, however, arrived on the market and included Beurre Bosc, Howells, Beurre d'Anjou and Winter Cole from Tasmania.

#### Poor Request for Small Oranges.

Good quality second-crop Valencia oranges again realised to the maximum of 20s. per case, but 16s. was the highest price obtainable when supplies were heavier. Small sizes of fruit, however, was very plentiful and generally sold from 5s. At times some lots were practically unsaleable.

#### Local Lemons Cheaper.

A firm market ruled for lemons from coastal centres early in the month when selected counts realised from 20s. to 25s., with plain grades from 12s. On the receipt of choice consignments from Queensland, however, values of New South Wales lines declined but improved towards the close when rain restricted harvesting in coastal groves. Queensland lots sold to the maximum.