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SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY**May, 1946.****SHEEP.****Increased Supplies.**

There was a total of 268,724 sheep and lambs penned for sale during the period under review, representing an increase of about 42,000 head compared with the April aggregate. This increase took place despite the fact that sales set down for 2nd and 6th May were not held owing to industrial trouble in the meat industry. Yardings were equalised to some extent, supplies on each sale day approximating between 36,000 and 40,000.

Scarcity of Good Quality Sheep.

Offerings in the grown sheep section comprised 150,274 wethers and ewes or about 20,000 more than the total penned in April. However, fair to good trade descriptions constituted the bulk of supplies, prime sheep, particularly heavy wethers, being available in relatively small numbers on each sale day. Plain and medium lots formed a fair percentage of the offerings submitted on a number of occasions.

Values Ease.

Prices for grown sheep generally were fairly well maintained during the first half of the month, heavy and light wethers mostly selling at $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 6d. with good quality light wethers reaching $6\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. on occasions. During this period heavy ewes chiefly sold at $4\frac{3}{4}$ d. to $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. while light ewes realised 5d. to $5\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. and at times $5\frac{3}{4}$ d. However, during the second half of May, a general weakening of values was apparent and at the close of the month rates were $\frac{1}{4}$ d., and in places $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. lower than those realised earlier.

Lambs More Plentiful.

Pennings showed a further increase, supplies aggregating 118,450 head compared with a total of 96,587 in April. General quality again showed a good deal of variation and, on the whole, could be classed as medium only. Prime light lambs were in moderate supply on most occasions, fair to good trade quality lines forming the bulk of offerings. Good to prime heavy lambs were fairly well in evidence on some sale days. Generally speaking, many lambs were showing the effects of the dry seasonal conditions in inland districts.

Prices Fairly Well Maintained.

Demand for lambs for the most part was satisfactory and prices generally continued to rule fairly firm, particularly for prime descriptions, which were at all times the subject of good inquiry. Good light lambs mainly sold at 9d. to 10d., although $10\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. was secured at times. Prices of heavy lambs for the most part ranged between $8\frac{1}{2}$ d. and $9\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.

Hoggets were relatively scarce and sold at $6\frac{1}{4}$ d. to $7\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb.

CATTLE.**Larger Supplies Available.**

Owing to a continuation of the industrial dispute, the first sale in May was not held until the 9th. Consignments generally during the balance of the period were fairly substantial and on two sale days the number yarded exceeded 3,000 head. The aggregate for the seven auctions was 19,625, including 3,187 sold in the store section.

The quality of the offerings was mostly fairly good although the proportion of grown stock showed considerable variation. Rainfall during May continued to be sub-normal and pastoral prospects for the winter are mostly unsatisfactory.

Variable Consignments of Bullocks.

Consignments of bullocks were variable in the extreme but mainly comprised good trade lightweights. Heavy descriptions were very scarce but good quality medium weights occasionally made a satisfactory showing.

Fluctuations in values during the period were not marked and rates for the most part ranged from 47s. to 52s. per 100 lb. On one occasion, however, quotations reached 54s. On the average, the market was slightly weaker than that of April.

Good Steers Well Represented.

Steers were plentiful throughout the month, and, except towards the close, good quality medium to heavy weight drafts were well in evidence. Values were highest during the first half of May when rates ranged from 50s. to 55s., and occasionally to 57s. per 100 lb. The market subsequently was weaker and at closing good to prime lines were quoted at 46s. to 52s. per 100 lb.

Heavy Supplies of Cows.

Truckings of cows during the greater part of May were unusually heavy and all grades of weight, chiefly of fair to good trade standard, were well represented. The market was fairly steady at 38s. to 43s. per 100 lb. on most sale days, but rates were weaker at closing.

Good Showing of Heifers.

Heifers made a particularly good showing and although lightweights predominated, heavier descriptions of good trade to prime quality were well in evidence. A very firm market ruled during the first half of the month, with quotations ranging from 45s. to 53s. per 100 lb. The market subsequently weakened and, at closing, values were from 41s. to 48s. per 100 lb.

Moderate Supplies of Vealers.

Consignments of vealers were limited early in the period but supplies later improved. All grades of weight were represented with heavier lines predominating. Quality was variable and there was a shortage of prime lots. Values showed some decline on the average of the previous month and while rates ranged to 60s. per 100 lb. during the first half, at closing they were from 48s. to 56s.

PIGS.

Increased Supplies.

Owing to the industrial dispute previously mentioned supplies on the opening sale day were well below normal. Consignments subsequently, however, were moderately heavy and the total for the period, 8,502 head, showed an improvement on the April penning. Of this number, 5,214 were received by rail, while an additional 600 were disposed of by private treaty.

Restricted Demand for Baconers.

Baconers were well represented throughout the month and comprised all grades of weight of generally fair to good trade standard. During the first half, heavy descriptions predominated, but later, light baconers were more in evidence than usual.

The market underwent a considerable change during May and the bulk of the baconers auctioned failed to realise the equivalent of 9d. per lb., the range of values being chiefly from 8¼d. to 8¾d. During the second half of the month, values of 9d. per lb. were noticed only in respect of odd sales of prime quality lines. Anticipating a reduction in the quantity of pigmeat to become available in the near future owing to the likelihood of the feed position worsening, the Controller of Meat Supplies is taking action with a view to building up a reserve of carcasses. For this purpose, operators' quotas have been reduced and baconers slaughtered in excess of their quota will be acquired at the scheduled rates and placed in store. The effect of this order was to restrict competition among buyers. The reduction of 1d. per lb. in the schedule rates for baconers in the 180-200 lb. grade has as yet made no difference in the prices being secured at auction. On a per head basis, values ranged to £7 11s. 6d. early in the period but later only odd lines sold to £7.

Backfatters Cheaper.

Consignments of backfatters were moderate and fair trade lightweights formed the bulk of supplies, prime heavy descriptions being mainly in short supply. A weaker market also ruled for this class of pigmeat and values generally were about 1d. per lb. below recent levels. The decline was most noticeable on inferior lines, boars in particular. At closing, rates ranged chiefly from 4½d. to 6¼d. per lb. The highest price noted per head was £14 1s. 6d.

Good Stores in Light Supply.

Porkers were fairly well represented and included all grades of weight and quality. The proportion of really suitable store pigs, however, was small. The lower rates obtaining for baconers affected the demand for stores and average values of porkers were the lowest for some time, some pigs being worth little more than 6d. per lb. Good stores, however, met keen competition at times and in odd instances rates ranged to 12d. per lb.

S. D. ROBERTSON & J. R. WILLIAMS.