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GENERAL NOTES AND NEWS.

Advices have come to hand from the Australian Wheat Board that up to 2nd February it had received approximately 55 million bushels of New South Wales wheat (including nearly one million bushels delivered to Victoria from the current season's crop). Assuming that about 5 million bushels will be retained on farms for seed etc., it would now appear that the State's total production will be in the vicinity of 60 million bushels. This compares with the final official forecast in November, 1945, of 53.6 million bushels.

At a recent conference of vegetable growers convened by the Division it was decided unanimously to recommend to the Minister for Agriculture that steps be taken to introduce an Act providing for the registration of vegetable growers in New South Wales. Resolutions along the same lines were adopted at previous conferences of the kind and were also endorsed at a Commonwealth conference of producers and officials in Melbourne in October of last year.

The Committee appointed by the Premier to examine the question of establishing a deep-sea port on the far North Coast and cognate matters, has completed an exhaustive investigation and has now furnished a comprehensive report on the subject.

At a meeting held on 4th February comprising the full Executive of the Associated Poultry Farmers of Australia, the Egg Marketing Board and the Chief of the Division of Marketing and Agricultural Economics, proposals for the post-war marketing of eggs were discussed. It was finally decided to ask the Egg Marketing Board to conduct a plebescite of producers in order to ascertain the wishes of the industry in that connection.

At the request of the Department of Post War Reconstruction information has been compiled from the records of the Division showing the realisations for certain classes of sheep at the Homebush Saleyards covering a period of ten years. These particulars are required in connection with proposals for the settlement of ex-servicemen on holdings for fat lamb raising.

A Committee was appointed by a recent conference of representatives of vegetable growers to go into the question of forming an organisation in New South Wales along the lines of the Queensland Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, having in mind the problems with regard to marketing, distribution, etc., which are likely to arise under post-war conditions. The Committee has already met and, broadly speaking, is in favour of setting up grower-controlled organisations of the kind in this State. Producers will be given an opportunity of expressing their views on the question.

The Markets Advisory Committee has taken the view that the existing Sydney Municipal Markets have become outmoded and that steps should be directed towards examining the question of their possible removal to a more appropriate site. Arrangements are being made in the first instance for members of the Committee to inspect suggested alternative sites in the Alexandria and Rosebery areas.

The Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council was held in Sydney on 7th and 8th February, when consideration was mainly devoted to post-war problems associated with primary industries. The agenda contained such items as fodder conservation, future of the District War Agricultural Committees' organisation, farm mechanisation, soil conservation and the production and marketing of various commodities, including wheat, potatoes, eggs and vegetables.

Western Australia has decided to join the Commonwealth Dairy Produce Equalisation Scheme. The Commonwealth Equalisation Committee now covers all butter and cheese products in Australia, with the exception of butter in South Australia.

In the present season, 250,000 cases of eggs in shell have been sent to Britain, while 14 million lb. of egg pulp and 1 million lb. of egg powder are expected to go forward in due course. Arrangements have been finalised to dispatch 1 million cases of eggs in shell and 20 million lb. of pulp in 1946-7, while a similar quantity of eggs in shell will be shipped the following year and no less than 36 million lb. of egg pulp.

Rationing of fodder in this State has ended. The N.S.W. Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Graham), has said that plenty of hay, chaff and oats should be available from now on, and there should also be plenty of bran and pollard after the milling programme has got well under way in February. However, wheat would still remain on the rationed list for stock feed.

In the course of an address to the American Wool Council Dr. Edgar Booth, Chairman of the International Wool Secretariat, expressed the opinion that, if properly handled, world surplus wool stocks could be absorbed within five years, and that after that time demand would exceed production.

Growers prices of the following vegetables were freed from price control as from 11th February:—

Beans, marrows, rhubarb, trombones, cucumbers, peas, sweet melon, watermelons, lettuce, pumpkins, sweet potatoes.

Retail prices will remain under the control of the Price Commissioner.

A slight increase in the wholesale rates of some lines was noticeable on the day in question but it was apparent that buyers were reluctant to pay prices in excess of the old "ceilings" as retail prices are still subject to control.

Export shipments of flour from Sydney which were suspended during the war, will be resumed on a considerable scale during February and are expected to show a steady increase thereafter.

SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY

JANUARY, 1946.

SHEEP.

Heavier Supplies Forward.

Pennings of sheep and lambs, which totalled 278,080 head, showed an increase of about 90,000 on the December offering. During the year ended 31st December, 1945, 3,381,316 head of sheep and lambs were auctioned at the Homebush Saleyards.

General Quality Very Fair.

The general standard of quality of the 171,299 grown sheep which were offered was very fair, medium to good light trade sheep being well supplied. On the other hand, prime heavy wethers generally were scarce, particularly the type usually purchased to meet the requirements of near country and country butchers. Prime weighty ewes offset this deficiency to some extent but many lines were overfat.