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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.

Sheep Market Irregular.

Values of sheep fluctuated to a considerable degree, rates realised in the early part of the month generally showing a marked downward trend. Prices at opening sales were from 1s. to 2s. lower, although rates fully recovered at the next sale; later, however, prices again declined, the fall ranging from 2s. to 4s. per head. Demand subsequently improved, advances in values ranging from 2s. to 5s., and in places 6s. per head, taking place. At the closing auctions, a further improvement of up to 2s. per head was evident for good quality sheep. The smaller numbers offering over the closing stages of the month were mainly responsible for the enhanced prices.

Good heavy wethers cost from 4d. to 5¼d. per lb. on the hoof for most of the period, with light selling at 3¾d. to 5¼d., but on occasions operators paid from 5½d. to 6d. and 5¾d. to 6¼d. per lb., respectively. Ewes mostly were disposed of at 3¼d. to 3¾d. for heavy grades, while light descriptions realised 3½d. to 4¼d. per lb., but at times heavy ewes sold at 4d. to 4¼d. and light at 4½d. to 4¾d., with some sales reaching 5d. per lb.



A Scene of Activity—Sheep Sales at Homebush, near Sydney.

More Lambs Available.

The number of lambs penned for sale was higher than in the previous month, the total being 106,781 head, although supplies at the last few sales of the period fell away considerably and proved insufficient for buyers' requirements. Generally, quality was only medium, many dry, light descriptions being included. Only comparatively few prime light grades were available, but good heavy lambs, although in short supply, made a better showing.

Rates for Lambs Advance.

Although some irregularity was evident in values of lambs and suckers, prices realised were considerably higher than those of the previous month. At the opening sales, lower prices ruled, the market generally being from 1s. to 3s. per head cheaper, but at the next auction an increase of from 1s. to 2s. per head occurred. Values remained fairly steady until about mid-January when a sharp rise took place, the advance in prices ranging from 2s. to 6s. per head. At the final auctions, a particularly strong demand ruled and rates in some instances showed a further advance.

The relative scarcity of prime lines and the generally light yardings contributed to the advance in prices. Furthermore, on 21st January, it was announced that the wholesale price of lamb would be increased by 1¼d. per lb. and retail cuts by 1d. to 2d. per lb. and these rises were also reflected in values on the hoof.

Prime heavy lambs and suckers made from 7d. to 8¼d. early in the month but later from 8½d. to 10d. per lb. was obtained. Light grades were worth from 7¾d. to 9d. generally but following on the rise in "ceiling" prices, operators paid from 9¼d. to 10¾d. per lb. and in some instances more for good light lambs and suckers.

CATTLE.**Heavy Supplies Yarded.**

Cattle offerings during January, 1946, were consistently heavy and aggregated 22,707 head, including 2,594 auctioned in the store section. The largest single offering was 3,540 head on the 17th.

The general standard of the pennings varied considerably from day to day, both as to quality and the proportion of grown stock available. On some occasions, small, fair trade beasts comprised the bulk of the consignments.

During the period, the most beneficial rain for some considerable time fell in many parts of inland New South Wales, including the far western areas. Much of the benefit to pastures, however, may be lost owing to persistent high temperatures, if further falls are not received at an early date.

Supplies of Bullocks Fluctuate.

Numbers of bullocks forward from day to day varied considerably, but for the most part, consignments were moderate and generally comprised good trade light and medium weights.

The higher closing rates of 1945 were not maintained, but average values were about equal to those of December. Quotations ranged chiefly from 49s. to 54s. per 100 lb. with values of medium weight descriptions usually a little higher than those of light weights.

Quality of Steers Declines.

Steers, as usual, were plentiful and during the early part of the period, there was a very satisfactory representation of good quality descriptions of all grades of weight. The general standard, however, declined later, fair trade light weights predominating with good trade sorts relatively scarce.

Rates showed considerable variation but average values were about on a par with those of the previous month. Prices were lowest on the 17th when rates for good to prime quality ranged from 45s. to 53s. per 100 lb. Values later ranged to 58s. per 100 lb.

Good Quality Cows Well Supplied.

Supplies for the most part were very satisfactory; good trade lines being well represented. Values were fairly well maintained during the first half of the month, and rates ranged at opening to 48s. per 100 lbs. Subsequently, the market weakened, and at closing, the highest price was equivalent to 45s. per 100 lb.

Weaker Market for Heifers.

Heifers were fairly well supplied although pennings comprised chiefly small beasts. Prices failed to reach the levels noted during December, 53s. per 100 lb. at opening being the highest. Quotations ranged from 42s. to 47s. when the market was weakest, but values improved at closing.

Prime Vealers Scarce.

Pennings of vealers were mostly moderate with all grades of weight and quality available. Fair to good trade sorts were well represented, but there was usually a shortage of prime descriptions.

Rates ranged to 64s. per 100 lb. at opening, but values showed a downward trend until towards the close when prices rose sharply and ranged from 55s. to 65s. per 100 lb. on the final sale day.

PIGS.**Increased Supplies.**

Numbers of pigs submitted at auction showed a considerable increase and totalled 8,807 head, including 5,342 received by rail.

Dearer Market for Baconers.

Baconers were well represented and included all grades of weight of generally fair to good trade standard. Owing to the general shortage in the trade, demand was particularly keen and

increases of up to 10s. per head over prices ruling at the final sale in December were noted at the opening auctions of 1946. No sales were held between 18th December, 1945, and 8th January, 1946. At the sale held on the latter date, prices ranged to £8 4s. 6d. per head, and up to 10½d. on a "per lb." basis. Estimated values exceeded 9d. per lb. for all pigs in the 100 lb. to 200 lb. range of weights. The high level of values was maintained throughout the month for light weights but rates were a little easier for heavy descriptions during the second half of the period.

Prime Backfatters Scarce.

Consignments of backfatters were variable but supplies generally were light and there was a shortage of prime heavy descriptions. A noticeable proportion of the pennings comprised boars. A dearer market ruled for this class of pig, rates ranging chiefly to 7¼d. per lb. with 7½d. being realised at times.

Keen Demand for Stores.

Porkers were in moderate supply and comprised all grades of weight. Quality was variable but the bulk of the pennings was suitable for purchase as stores. Demand was even stronger than was experienced in the previous month and up to 15d. per lb. was paid for suitable lightweights. Heavy sorts realised to 12d. per lb.

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

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALES AT CITY MUNICIPAL MARKETS.

January, 1946.

FRUIT.

Good Quality Fruit in Request.

Demand for choice fruit was very good during the month. Inquiry, however, was not satisfactory for a number of lines of small apples, some stone fruits and second-crop Valencia oranges. Clearances of these types of fruit were difficult to effect, the limited quantity of sugar available to housewives appearing to be the principal factor affecting the sale of small stone fruits and cooking apples, while the poor appearance of many lines of oranges hindered their sale.

Dessert Apples Sell Readily.

There was a gradual increase in supplies of apples, which included Queensland and Victorian consignments. Coloured dessert varieties, which comprised only a small proportion of stocks, met a good demand, the best trade sizes realising the maximum of 29s. per bushel. On the other hand, very small fruit was difficult to sell, rates ranging from 10s.