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SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY.**March, 1948.****SHEEP.****Smaller Numbers Available.**

Owing to the incidence of the Easter holiday period, when no sales were held, aggregate pennings were below those of the previous month. Supplies amounted to 157,548 head offered on eight selling days, or an average of 19,694 head on each sale day. Offerings were comparatively light and insufficient for full trade needs. They were substantially below those for the corresponding month last year when pennings comprised 230,623 head.

Heavy Sheep Scarce.

The grown sheep submitted totalled 78,958 head with quite a few plain descriptions included, suitable only for store purposes. For the most part, however, medium to good useful light trade wethers and ewes were in good supply, although on occasions wethers were not so numerous as ewes. Some particularly good quality drafts of heavy sheep were offered, but generally this class of mutton was relatively scarce.

Sharp Decline in Skin Values but Carcase Dearer.

Values fluctuated over the month and were highest about the middle of the period. At the early sales rates were very firm while at the following auctions an advance of from 1s. to 4s. per head occurred. During the second week, although a sharp decline occurred in skin values, resulting in a fall of from 2s. to 4s. per head, the actual cost of the carcase was not affected. Skin values also showed a further reduction during the month. Later demand was particularly strong and an additional increase of from 1s. to 2s. per head took place. Before the close of the month's operations, realisations were not so high, and most classes showed a decline of from 1s. to 2s., but prices recovered at the concluding sales and the market closed strong. Prices per head reached fairly high levels, a draft of prime heavy wethers selling to 77s. Quite a few good quality heavy wethers were disposed of at prices ranging from 60s. to 65s., each with other lots of good light to heavy trade descriptions making from 38s. to 59s. per head. The cost of mutton reached higher levels than in February, heavy wethers making to 9½d. and light to 9¾d. per lb., compared with 8d. to 8½d. per lb. for heavy and light respectively in the previous month. Ewes also sold well and made to 58s. per head, with other prime weighty drafts making from 51s. to 56s. Generally, however, sales of the better class of ewes offering were effected at prices ranging from 36s. to 50s. per head. Best quality heavy ewe mutton reached 8d. per lb. and light 8½d., representing an increase of 1½d. per lb. on the highest rates paid in February. For the most part, however, heavy ewes were worth from 5¼d. to 7¾d. and light 5¾d. to 8¼d. per lb. In the accompanying schedule the carcase cost of good to prime sheep on each sale day is indicated.

Fewer Lambs Offered.

The number of lambs available showed a decline on the previous month's total, pennings comprising 78,590 head which indicates a fairly even distribution of sheep and lambs for the period. Prime light grades continued to be scarce, but medium to good useful trade sorts were fairly well represented. On the other hand, good to prime heavy lambs generally were in good supply, some very heavy weight consignments being included.

Higher Cost of Lamb.

The light supplies offering promoted a consistently strong demand throughout, and the cost of lamb was substantially higher, reaching peak levels at the final sales. At the beginning of the month, values were very firm to 1s. dearer, but at the following auctions a further advance of from 1s. to 2s. per head was evident. Subsequently a further increase in the cost of the carcass was evident, but at the auctions held on the 22nd of the month values mostly were from 1s. to 2s. per head lower. Prices, however, recovered at the final sales and reached the highest level ruling during the period.

Although throughout February the best price per lb. obtained for heavy and light lambs was $11\frac{1}{2}$ d. and $12\frac{1}{4}$ d. respectively, so keen was the inquiry during March that the cost of lamb reached to $12\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb. for heavy grades with lightweights making to 14d. per lb. Over the period, from $10\frac{1}{4}$ d. to $12\frac{1}{2}$ d. was mostly paid for the heavy carcasses and 11d. to $13\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. for the lightweights.

On a per head basis, up to 62s. per head was realised for prime heavy lambs, other good quality heavy grades making from 48s. to 60s. each according to weight and skin values. Good quality light lambs sold at from 42s. to 52s. per head, plain and medium grades being at lower levels.

Pennings of hoggets were comparatively small, but those on offer mostly were of good to prime quality, heavy descriptions predominating. The cost of the carcass advanced appreciably on the prevailing rates of the previous month, reaching to $10\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb., although in most instances they were obtained at from $9\frac{1}{4}$ d. to $10\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. with occasional extra heavy drafts from $8\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb.

The schedule which follows indicates the trend in the per lb. cost of the respective carcasses over the period.

Sheep and Lambs: Good to Prime Quality.

Prices shown in pence per lb. Based on selling price per head of live animal (skin values excluded) and estimated dressed weight of carcase.

Date of Sale.	No. Yarded.	Suckers and Lambs.		Hoggets.	Wethers.		Ewes.	
		Heavy.	Light.		Heavy.	Light.	Heavy.	Light.
1948.		d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.
1 March ...	16,690	10½-11½	11-12½	8½-9½	7-8	7½-8½	5½-6½	5½-7
4 " ...	15,096	10½-12	11½-13	9½-10½	7½-9	7½-9	5½-7	6½-7½
8 " ...	13,795	11½-12½	12-13	9½-10½	8-9	8½-9½	6½-7½	7-7½
11 " ...	23,762	11½-12½	12-13	9½-10½	8-9½	8½-9½	6½-7½	7½-8½
15 " ...	16,295	11½-12½	12½-13½	10-10½	8-9½	8½-9½	6½-8	7½-8½
18 " ...	25,233	11½-12½	12½-13½	9½-10½	8-9½	8½-9½	6½-8	7½-8½
22 " ...	32,170	11½-12½	12-13½	9½-10½	7½-9	8-9	6½-7½	7½-8
25 " ...	14,597	11½-12½	12½-14	9½-10½	8-9½	8-9½	6½-7½	7½-8½
29 " ...	Easter Monday	Public Holiday—No sales.						

G. COLEMAN.

CATTLE.**Further Improvement in Supplies.**

Consignments for March aggregated 16,588 head, an increase of more than 600 over the February pennings. Store cattle included in the offering comprised 2,217 head.

Quality of the yardings, although generally not up to the standard of the previous month, was chiefly fair to good with a satisfactory representation of prime and weighty lots.

All Beef Dearer.

A brighter tone was apparent in the market during earlier sales, and, although the best prices realised on these days were not always fully maintained throughout the month, values at the conclusion of trading were higher than the closing rates of the previous month.

It could be said generally that the heavy fall in prices recorded during February was partly recovered in March for most classes. In the case of vealers the recovery was complete. Prices ruling during the month are shown in the attached schedule.

Bullocks Well Represented.

Light and medium weight bullocks of chiefly fair to good quality were well in evidence, while a further improvement was noticed in supplies of good weighty lines.

A comparison of quotations reveals that the average price of light and medium weight bullocks was from 15s. to 25s. higher in March than in February, while heavy classes were up to £2 per head dearer.

Good Quality Steers Again Plentiful.

Steers continued to be well supplied, all grades of weight and quality being available for buyers' requirements.

The best market was that of the 4th of the month, when values ranged from 59s. to 66s. per 100 lb. Rates throughout the month averaged 10s. to 15s. per head higher than those of February.

Improved Offerings of Cows.

Good quality cows were fairly scarce at some of the early sales, but later offerings showed a considerable improvement, a marked increase being observed in supplies of heavyweight sorts.

Closing rates for both light and heavy descriptions ranged from 46s. to 53s. per 100 lb., compared with the 45s. to 52s. and 44s. to 50s., respectively, quoted at the conclusion of trading in February. Light cows averaged to 10s. and heavy to 30s. per head dearer during March.

Heifers in Short Supply.

Heifers were in generally short supply. The majority were lightweights of good trade standard, heavy descriptions being particularly scarce.

No great fluctuation in rates was recorded for this class of stock, the trend in prices being similar to that of steers.

Strong Demand for Vealers.

Although prime vealers were comparatively scarce, useful light and medium weight sorts were generally available in satisfactory numbers.

Demand was at all times very strong. Rates opened at 68s. to 78s. per 100 lb., and subsequently rose to 72s. to 79s. on the 15th of the month, closing at 70s. to 78s. Vealers were generally from 10s. to 15s. per head dearer in March than in February.

Cattle: Good to Prime Quality.

Values shown in shillings per 100 lb. Based on selling price per head of live beast and estimated dressed weight of carcase.

Date.	No. Yarded.	Bullocks.			Steers.	Cows.		Heifers.	Vealers.
		Heavy, Over 775 lb.	Medium, 675-775 lb.	Light, 575-675 lb.	All Weights.	Heavy, Over 575 lb.	Light, 400-575 lb.	All Weights.	All Weights Approx. 200-400 lb.
1948.									
26 Feb.	1,760	51-56	52-59	54-60	55-63	44-50	45-52	55-62	68-76
1 Mar.	1,170	...	54-62	54-62	58-65	44-52	46-52	57-64	68-78
4 "	1,534	59-61	59-64	56-64	59-66	48-54	48-56	59-66	68-78
8 "	2,284	59-62	59-64	58-64	59-64	48-54	48-55	58-64	68-76
11 "	2,527	55-59	56-62	56-62	59-64	47-53	48-54	59-64	70-76
15 "	1,946	56-60	57-62	57-63	58-65	48-55	48-55	59-65	72-79
18 "	2,723	55-59	56-61	56-62	58-64	47-55	47-55	57-64	70-77
22 "	2,915	54-58	55-61	55-61	57-63	46-53	46-53	56-64	70-77
25 "	1,489	53-59	55-61	55-61	57-65	46-53	46-53	60-64	70-78

P. F. SEXTON.

PIGS.

Decline in Numbers Available.

The overall pennings of pigs during the period showed a decline when compared with the previous month's aggregate of 7,439 head, supplies amounting to 5,833, of which arrivals by rail accounted for 2,812 head. Average yardings on each sale day were 1,167 head, while the smallest offering was at the final auctions, when only 522 were submitted. In March, 1947, the supply position was little better, offerings being 6,103 head.

Extra Heavy Baconers Numerous.

Throughout the month the extra heavy class of baconers were numerous, particularly those estimated to dress from 200 to 240 lb., but the offerings in the other weight grades were only moderate. Quality generally was fairly good, and some very nice lines of pigs were included. Prices which declined sharply during February showed some improvement for the light, medium and heavy weight grades. Due primarily to the fairly substantial pennings of the extra heavy baconers, however, demand for these was not so strong and prices eased, but showed some recovery at the final auctions. The lightweight baconers, which were realising from 10¾d. to 12½d. per lb. at the early sales, made from 11½d. to 12¾d. at the end of the period. Medium and heavy weight grades, which sold at from 10¾d. to 12¼d. per lb. at the opening auctions, were worth from 11½d. to 12¾d. and 11½d. to 12½d. per lb., respectively, at the concluding auctions. In the extra heavy weight grades, pigs estimated to dress from 160 to 180 lb. realised from 11d. to 12d. per lb. at the first sale held, but later prices eased to 11¼d. to 11¾d. per lb.; pigs estimated to weigh from 180 to 200 lb. showed a decline of from ¼d. to ½d. per lb. over the period, closing sales being 11d. to 11¾d. per lb.; those in the weight grade of 200 to 240 lb., which made from 9½d. to 11¼d. per lb. at the final sales, were for the most part from ¼d. to ½d. per lb. cheaper. The highest price realised for baconers was £10 8s. 6d. per head for prime extra heavy descriptions, while lightweights sold from £4 10s. 6d. per head. Variations in rates during the month are shown in the accompanying schedule.

Rates Lower for Backfatters.

Only moderate numbers of backfatters were yarded, and, although quality was variable, good to prime heavy grades made a fairly good showing throughout. At the first auctions held demand was restricted and values showed a decline of from 5s. to 10s. per head, but from then on until the end of March rates for the most part did not vary to any appreciable extent. Generally, backfatters estimated to dress from 250 to 350 lb. made from 7¼d. to 9¼d. per lb. and heavier weights 7d. to 8½d. per lb. On a per head basis, up to £17 18s. 6d. per head was realised.

Better Inquiry for Porkers.

Although the opening sales were marked by a decline in values of from 2s. 6d. to 5s. per head for porkers, a better inquiry at following sales resulted in prices reaching higher levels, the shortage of lambs and the prevailing high prices for this class of meat tending to stimulate the demand for pork. Porkers were in fairly good supply for the greater part of the month, but were particularly scarce at the last sale held during the period. All grades of weight were included, but a fairly large proportion of those on offer comprised good trade medium to heavy descriptions.

During the month extra light weights estimated to dress from 35 lb. to 50 lb. sold at from 34s. 6d. to 58s. 6d., equivalent to 11¼d. to 14½d. per lb. Lightweight, 50 lb. to 60 lb., made from 47s. 6d. to 69s. 6d. per head or 11d. to 13¾d. per lb.; medium weights realised 55s. 6d. to 92s. 6d. each or 11d. to 13¾d. per lb. The cost of the heavy porker carcase ranged from 11d. to 13½d. per lb., while realisations on a per head basis reached 101s. 6d.

With prospects of increased supplies of pigs in the near future, it is anticipated that the ruling high level for pigmeats will not be fully maintained and operators should be in position to secure their requirements more in conformity with the wholesale limits.

The accompanying schedule will serve as a guide to price variations in carcase costs over the period.

Pigs: Good to Prime Quality.

Prices shown in pence per lb. Based on selling price per head of live animal and estimated dressed weight of carcase.

Date of Sale, 1948	2 Mar.	9 Mar.	16 Mar.	23 Mar.	30 Mar.
No. Yarded each Sale... ..	1,315	1,143	1,411	1,442	522
Estimated prices per lb. for—	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.
Porkers—					
35-50 lb., Extra Light	11¼-13½	11¼-13½	11¾-14	12-14	-14½
50-60 lb., Light	11-13	11-13½	11¾-13½	12-13½	-13½
60-70 lb., Medium	11-13	11-13	11¾-13	12-13½	12½-13½
70-80 lb., Medium	11-12½	11-12½	11¾-13	12-13½	12½-13½
80-90 lb., Heavy	11-12½	11-12½	11¾-13	12-13½	12½-13½
Intermediates—					
90-100 lb.	11-12½	11-12½	11¾-12½	11½-12½	12-12½
Baconers—					
100-110 lb. Light	10¾-12½	11-12½	11¾-12½	11¼-12½	11½-12½
110-120 lb., Light	10¾-12½	11-12½	11¾-12½	11-12½	11½-12½
120-130 lb., Medium	10¾-12½	10¾-12½	11-12½	11-12½	11½-12½
130-160 lb., Heavy	10¾-12½	10¾-12½	11-12½	11-12½	11½-12½
160-180 lb., Extra Heavy	11-12	11-12	11-12	11-11½	11½-11½
180-200 lb., Extra Heavy	10¾-12	10¾-12	10¾-12	10¾-11½	11-11½
200-240 lb., Extra Heavy	9½-11½	9½-11½	9½-11½	9½-11½	9½-11½
Backfatters—					
250-350 lb.	7¼-9¼	7¼-9¼	7¼-9¼	7¼-9	7½-9
350 lb. and over	7-8¼	7-8½	7-8½	7-8½	7¼-8½

G. COLEMAN.