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of sugar production is related to the general "tug-of-war" between primary and industrial production for manpower. However, on a wider plane, trends in production must be observed in the general international context. It seems likely that the supply of sugar will not be long reaching the "cash demand" as distinct from nutritional requirements.

J. B. MAYNE.

SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY.

January, 1948.

SHEEP.

Sharp Decline in Numbers.

During the period yardings for the most part were relatively light and showed a decline of 46,000 on the previous month's aggregate. Overall supplies amounted to 132,519 head, the figure for the corresponding month of last year being 136,593. Early in January numbers available were affected by the industrial trouble at the Homebush Abattoirs, the penning on the 8th January of only 1,959 head of sheep and 4,073 lambs being the smallest for some considerable time. The incidence of public holidays over the New Year and on Anniversary Day were also factors contributing to the falling off in supplies.

Heavy Sheep Scarce.

The scarcity of good quality heavy sheep was again manifest and operators desiring to purchase this class of mutton often experienced difficulty in obtaining their full requirements. Shorn sheep were numerous, but more length was noticed on most of the fleeces carried, while odd lots of three-quarters to full woolled descriptions were included. For the most part, however, fair to good useful light trade sorts were well represented, some very nice quality drafts being noticed throughout.

Mutton Prices at High Levels.

The comparatively small supply of 56,171 head of sheep resulted in a keen inquiry and while fluctuations occurred during the month's operations prices reached higher levels than those ruling during December. At the opening sales, rates were well maintained with some prime lots realising higher values. However, at the following auctions all good quality wethers and ewes were dearer, an increase of up to 2s. per head being evident. The market remained fairly steady until mid-January when values declined by from 1s. to 2s. A particularly strong demand was noticeable at the next sale and a sharp rise occurred which ranged from 3s. to 5d. per head for all good quality consignments. Later in the month realisations were not fully maintained and at the final sales most classes submitted were from 1s. to 4s. per head cheaper. Some prime weighty wethers made to 70s. per head, but generally operators paid from 37s. to 61s. for good quality lots, other

grades being disposed of at lower figures. In the previous month heavy wethers were worth up to $8\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. and light $8\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. but in January heavy and light weights made $9\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. For the most part, however, the cost of heavy and light mutton ranged from $7\frac{1}{4}$ d. to $8\frac{3}{4}$ d. and $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 9d. per lb. respectively. The shortage of good quality wethers at times stimulated the demand for ewes and some good quality lots made to 57s. per head. For the most part, however, prices for the better grades ranged from 33s. to 54s. each according to weight and skin values. Heavy and light ewe mutton cost up to $8\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. but rates chiefly were from $5\frac{3}{4}$ d. to $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. and $5\frac{3}{4}$ d. to $7\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb. for heavy and light respectively. Plainer grades were obtained at relatively lower prices. The accompanying schedule indicates the trend in the cost of mutton over the period.

Pennings of Lambs Lighter.

A further decline occurred in the supplies of lambs and suckers reaching the market, the total of 76,348 head representing a decline of approximately 13,000 on the previous month's aggregate. Quality throughout showed a wide variation but mostly was very fair to good. The offering of prime light lambs, dressing up to 36 lb., was limited but medium to good useful light trade lambs and suckers were yarded in moderate numbers with quite a few lots of plainer descriptions also included. Prime weighty sorts generally made a very satisfactory showing, some lots submitted being of exceptionally good quality but far too heavy for local trade needs.

Prices Rule Higher for Lambs.

A good demand ruled for all suitable trade and prime lines of lambs and suckers during the greater part of the month and the average cost of the carcass was higher than in the preceding period but at the close of operations values were lower. At the opening sales rates were very firm and subsequently an increase of from 1s. to 2s. per head was apparent. Little quotable change was noticed until the end of the month when realisations declined appreciably. At the second last sale held, when supplies improved, most classes were from 1s. to 2s. cheaper and at the final auctions a further decline of from 1s. to 3s. was noticed. Several drafts of prime heavy lambs and suckers were disposed of at from 60s. to 65s. per head, while many lots submitted made from 50s. to 59s. each. Other good quality light to heavy grades sold at from 40s. to 48s. with plainer sorts relatively lower. On occasions prime heavy carcasses were worth up to 12d. per lb. and light $12\frac{1}{2}$ d. but generally heavy lambs cost from $9\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $11\frac{3}{4}$ d. and light $10\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $12\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. Comparable figures for December were 9d. to $11\frac{1}{4}$ d. and $10\frac{1}{4}$ d. to $12\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. for heavy and light carcasses respectively.

Hoggets continued to be fairly scarce and, with the keen demand which prevailed, rates were higher although in common with sheep and lambs, prices were lower at the end of the period. For the most part they cost from $8\frac{3}{4}$ d. to $9\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb., but at the closing auctions prices eased to $8\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $9\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb.

On the attached schedule the range of prices over the period are shown.

Sheep: Good to Prime Quality.

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

Date of Sale.	Number Yarded.	Suckers and Lambs.		Hoggets.	Wethers.		Ewes.		
		Heavy.	Light.		Heavy.	Light.	Heavy.	Light.	
1948.									
5 January	15,423	9½-11½	10½-12½	8½-9½	7½-8½	7½-8½	5½-6½	5½-7	
8 "	6,032	10½-11½	11½-12½	9-9½	7½-8½	8-9	6½-7	6½-7½	
12 "	12,845	10½-12	11½-12½	9-9½	7½-8½	8-9	6½-7	6½-7½	
15 "	28,241	10½-12	11½-12½	8½-9½	7½-8	7½-8½	6½-6½	6½-7½	
19 "	15,806	10½-12	11½-12½	9-9½	8-8½	8½-9	6½-7½	7-8½	
22 "	22,926	10½-11½	10½-12½	9½-9½	8-9½	8½-9½	6½-8½	7½-8½	
26 "		Public Holiday (No Sales Held.)							
29 "	31,246	10-11½	10½-11½	8½-9½	6½-7½	7½-8	6½-7	6½-7½	

G. COLEMAN.

CATTLE.

Supplies Light.

Public holidays occurred on the 1st and 26th of the month, while industrial trouble at the Homebush Abattoirs was responsible for small yardings on another two days. Total consignments consequently were light, only 12,698 head being auctioned, including 1,458 sold in the store section. The number offered was 5,280 less than the 17,978 head yarded during the previous month. Light and medium weight stock comprised the bulk of the penning and quality generally was good, while an increase in the number of prime lots available was evident.

Higher Prices Realised.

The reduced supplies available resulted in a keen demand and increased rates for all classes. The highest values were realised on the 19th of the month when prices for some bullocks were 30s. per head dearer than the best December quotes. Increased penning on the last two sale days, however, resulted in a decline in values to about the same level as the final quotations for the previous month.

An average of the prices ruling over the whole of trading operations for both months revealed that all classes of stock were dearer during January. Bullocks, steers and heifers were dearer by £1 to more than £2, and cows by 15s. to 30s. Vealer prices also showed a slight increase. Rates ruling during the month are shown on the attached schedule.

Heavy Bullocks Scarce.

Light and medium weight bullocks of generally good to prime quality were well represented but heavy descriptions were scarce.

The high prices realised about the middle of the month were not maintained and final quotations approximated those of the concluding day's auctions in December.

Good Quality Steers.

Steers made up a good proportion of each yarding, and all weights were available, quality chiefly being satisfactory. The best values of the month were 66s. to 71s. per 100 lb. recorded on the 19th January; but on a weaker market at closing, steers realised 58s. to 65s. per 100 lb. or slightly below the final December quotations.

Fewer Cows Available.

Cows were not nearly so well supplied as during the previous month. Several lots of only plain description were in evidence, but the majority were heavyweights of fair to good quality.

With the number of bullocks available throughout most of the month being insufficient to meet the requirements of buyers, exceptionally good prices generally were realised for cow beef. However, heavy yardings towards the close of the month resulted in a decline of values for both light and heavy descriptions.

Heifers in Short Supply.

Heifers were in short supply on most sale days. Those on offer chiefly were lightweights of good trade standard.

The closing rates of 54s. to 62s. per 100 lb. were less than the final December quotes of 57s. to 65s. The highest prices realised during the month were 66s. to 71s. recorded on the 19th.

Quality of Vealers Improves.

Although vealers were not consistently well supplied, some good yardings were on offer, and an improved representation of prime lots was in evidence.

The trend in values followed that of most other cattle, rising to the highest level of 72s. to 78s. per 100 lb. on the 19th of the month. The closing rates of 68s. to 75s. per 100 lb. were the same as those ruling at the concluding sale of the previous month.

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. All weights.	Cows.		Heifers All weights	Vealers. All weights approx. 200-400 lb.	
		Heavy over 775 lb.	Medium 675-775 lb.	Light 575-675 lb.		Heavy over 575 lb.	Light 400-575 lb.			
29 December 1947.	...	2,336	56-59	57-60	58-63	59-67	46-54	49-58	57-65	68-75
5 January 1948.	...	1,519	.....	61-67	61-69	61-69	50-60	55-61	60-68	68-76
8 "	...	497	56-60	62-67	65-69	64-72	56-59	57-63	67-70	68-76
12 "	...	1,368	56-60	62-67	63-69	63-70	50-57	53-57	63-68	68-75
15 "	...	2,093	58-60	63-67	65-69	65-71	52-58	55-61	63-71	70-77
19 "	...	1,669	58-61	64-68	66-69	66-71	50-58	54-62	66-71	72-78
22 "	...	2,799	57-60	62-65	62-66	62-69	50-57	53-58	63-69	72-78
29 "	...	2,753	55-59	56-62	58-62	58-65	48-54	50-54	54-62	68-75

P. F. SEXTON.

PIGS.

Sharp Decline in Numbers.

Sales of pigs were resumed at the Homebush Abattoir Pig Saleyards on 6th January, 1948, after the usual Christmas and New Year holiday period. Supplies for the month showed a sharp decline and were about 2,000 head below the previous month's aggregate. Owing to an industrial dispute at the Homebush Abattoirs early in the month, offerings at the opening sales were limited, comprising only 343 head. Subsequently numbers available improved and the overall figure for the month was 3,670, arrivals by rail accounting for 956 head. For the corresponding period last year, yardings amounted to 4,354 head.

Unusually High Prices for Baconers.

Although baconers comprised a good proportion of the offering and most grades of weight were available, the numbers submitted were not sufficient to meet the requirements of operators and a particularly keen demand was evident at all auctions. For the most part, heavy to extra grades predominated and quite a few lots noticed were carrying too much condition, being definitely over-fat. Good trade light to medium weights, however, were not so numerous. Demand was particularly strong throughout and all classes of baconers sold at higher levels than those prevailing in December. Due to the effect of the industrial dispute, prices at the opening auctions were lower, but at subsequent sales operators bid freely for all classes offered and rates advanced. By the end of the month they were from 10s. to 25s. higher than at the commencement of the period, with some lots at times showing a further improvement. Light weight baconers were worth from 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb. and sold from £5 18s. 6d. per head. Medium weights estimated to dress from 120 to 130 lb. realised from 13d. to 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb., while heavy weights were disposed of at from 13d. to 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. Extra heavy grades estimated to dress from 160 to 180 lb. and 180 to 200 lb. made from 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. and 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. respectively. Pigs estimated to dress from 200 to 240 lb. sold to £13 6s. 6d. per head, the cost of the carcase ranging from 11d. to 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. Reviewed generally, prices for all grades of baconers were at the highest level for many years. The accompanying schedule indicates the trend in prices throughout the period.

Keen Inquiry for Backfatters.

Throughout the period, backfatters were in relatively short supply but all grades of weight were included with good to prime heavy sorts forming the bulk of those on offer. Apart from the opening sale, when inquiry was limited, a keen demand generally prevailed and values for the most part advanced. Light descriptions estimated to dress from 250 to 350 lb. were obtained at from 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. compared with 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to 10d. in December. Heavy-weights dressing from 350 lb upwards ranged from 8d. to 9d. per lb. On a per head basis, up to £16 11s. 6d. was realised.

Moderate Supplies of Porkers.

Only moderate numbers of porkers were penned for which a keen demand prevailed by producers for restocking purposes, the existing high rates rendering them prohibitive for sale as pork at controlled prices. Other classes of store pigs were also disposed of at very firm rates, the prevailing high prices being obtained for baconers and the shortage of pig meats for curing being factors contributing to the strong inquiry manifest during the month for all pigs suitable for the subsequent production of baconers.

Rates for porkers and store pigs showed a further advance on those of the previous month. Extra light 35-50 lb. cost from 15½d. to 18½d. per lb. and made from 45s. 6d. to 75s. 6d. per head. Lightweights 50 to 60 lb. sold at from 15½d. to 18d. per lb. or 63s. 6d. to 88s. 6d. each. Medium weights 60 to 80 lb. were worth from 14¾d. to 17¼d. per lb. or 77s. 6d. to 109s. 6d. each. The heavyweight porkers 80 to 90 lb. realised 14¼d. to 16¾d. per lb., while on a per head basis 92s. 6d. to 120s. 6d. was obtained.

Pigs: Good to Prime Quality.

Values shown in pence per lb.—Based on selling price per head of live animals and estimated dressed weight of carcase.

Date of Sale, 1948	6th January.*	13th January.	20th January.	27th January.
Number yarded each sale	343	892	1,314	1,121
Estimated prices per lb. for—				
Porkers—35-50 lb.—Extra Light	} 13½-15½	15½-18	15½-18	15½-18½
50-60 lb.—Light		15½-17½	15½-17½	15½-18
60-70 lb.—Medium		15-16½	15-16½	15½-17½
70-80 lb.—Medium		14½-16½	14½-16½	14½-17
80-90 lb.—Heavy		14½-16	14½-16½	14½-16½
Intermediates—90-100 lb. ... ..	...	13½-15½	14-15½	14½-15½
Baconers—100-110 lb.—Light	} 11-13½	13½-15½	13½-15½	13½-15½
110-120 lb.—Light		13½-14½	13½-14½	13½-15
120-130 lb.—Medium		13-14½	13½-14	13½-14½
130-160 lb.—Heavy		13-14	13-14	13½-14½
160-180 lb.—Extra Heavy... ..		12½-13½	12½-14	13-14½
180-200 lb.—Extra Heavy... ..		12½-13½	12½-13½	13-14½
200-240 lb.—Extra Heavy... ..	...	11-13	11-13	12-13½
Backfatters—250-350 lb.	} 8½-9½	8½-10½	8½-10½	8½-10½
350 lb. and over		8-9	8-9	8-9

* At sale held on 6th January, 1948—owing to the relatively small number of pigs on offer and mixed quality of yarding, it was not practicable to give a full classification of prices. These, however, were grouped as indicated.

G. COLEMAN.