

SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY.Improved cattle supplies.

Cattle truckings during April were more even than for some time past and there was a noticeable improvement in the number coming forward. The aggregate for the period was 16,519 head. The number auctioned in the store section (4,094) was again relatively high.

Quality continued to show a marked variation but generally it was no worse than that of March. Indeed, on some occasions, an improvement was noticeable. The bulk of the consignments comprised small stock of generally medium to fair trade standard.

During April, beneficial rain fell over a fairly wide area but the drought-stricken sections of the West and South-West failed to participate. In any case, further falls are urgently required in most districts.

Bullocks cheaper.

Supplies of bullocks were very limited at times but they were moderate on other occasions when truckings comprised chiefly fair to good trade light and medium weights.

The market was not quite so strong as during March and only on one occasion did quotations reach 60/- per 100 lb. During the final week light bullocks were quoted at 52/- to 55/- per 100 lb., but the market improved at closing, rates reaching 58/-. Heavy bullocks have been extremely scarce of late but a few were noticed during the final week. These sold to £24.1.0 per head.

Small steers well supplied.

Steers were well in evidence throughout the period but small, fair trade lightweights predominated. Quality was variable and on occasions good trade medium weights made a fairly satisfactory showing while the aggregate number of prime heavy sorts submitted would not be inconsiderable.

Values were somewhat below those of March but demand was keen and the market fairly steady, quotations for good to prime grade ranging chiefly from 50/- to 58/- per 100 lb.

Heavy cows scarce.

Apart from dairy breeds, cows were in light supply during the greater part of the period but consignments increased considerably during the final week. The general standard of quality was also much higher. Lightweights greatly predominated and heavy descriptions were noticed, chiefly in odd lots. The market fluctuated somewhat but variations were not marked and quotations for best grade beasts averaged about 50/- per 100 lb.

Fair showing of heifers.

Heifers were fairly well represented although, on occasions, it was only possible to secure fair trade lightweights, while heavy beasts were scarce. The market was fairly steady and good to prime lots were quoted mainly at 47/- to 56/- per 100 lb. These rates were somewhat below those of March.

Prime vealers scarce.

Vealers were well supplied and the ponnings included all grades of weight and quality. Prime descriptions were usually scarce and were noticed chiefly amongst the heavier weights.

Rates fluctuated fairly widely and while quotations ranged to 66/- per 100 lb. at the close, 55/- was the highest noted in the middle of the month.

Supplies of sheep and lambs increase.

There was an appreciable increase in the number of sheep and lambs available during March and the consignments forward throughout April were again larger. Pennings during the period totalled 313,512 head or about 14,000 more than the previous month's aggregate.

Plain sheep numerous.

The yardings of grown sheep comprised 181,558 head and plain to medium grade wethers and ewes were well in evidence. Good to prime heavy wethers were very scarce but moderate numbers of good heavy ewes were included and a fair proportion of the supply was made up of medium to good light trade sheep.

Sheep values irregular.

The fluctuation of supplies over the period was mainly responsible for the substantial variation in values. Although a firm market ruled at opening sales, following auctions were marked by fairly wide variations in realisations. During the second week, prices increased by from 1/- to 3/- per head but the advance was not of long duration, and by mid-April values were about on a par with those ruling at the early sales. Subsequently a much stronger tone prevailed and prices again advanced, increases ranging from 2/- to 4/- per head, and in places 5/- occurring at the last two auctions held. The market closed very firm for good to prime grades. Values for plain to medium quality sheep also were much firmer.

Despite fluctuations, the average cost of mutton showed little appreciable change. For the most part, good quality

wethers were worth from 4d to $5\frac{1}{2}$ d with some outstanding lots at $5\frac{3}{4}$ d to 6d per lb. Ewes mostly were disposed of at from $3\frac{1}{2}$ d to $4\frac{1}{2}$ d per lb. but on occasions prime lines made from $4\frac{3}{4}$ d to $5\frac{1}{4}$ d.

More lambs offered.

A further improvement occurred in the number of lambs yarded, a total of 131,954 head coming forward for sale or approximately 17,000 more than was offered in March. Quality was chiefly fair only. Good to prime light lambs were scarce but heavy summer lambs in prime condition made a much better showing. Suckers were again in very limited supply.

Prices fluctuate.

In common with grown sheep, prices for lambs fluctuated considerably. Some exceptionally good sales were effected and on occasions up to 38/- per head was realised with many lots being disposed of at from 30/- to 35/-. Prime heavy descriptions sold to $8\frac{1}{2}$ d per lb. but this class of lamb mostly sold at 7d to 8d. Light grades sold at as high as 9d but generally $7\frac{1}{2}$ d to $8\frac{1}{2}$ d was the range for this class. Hoggets were in rather short supply and the better class offerings commanded $5\frac{3}{4}$ d to $6\frac{3}{4}$ d with occasional drafts of extra prime at 7d to $7\frac{1}{2}$ d per lb.

Pig supplies show small increase.

Except on the first sale day, which followed the Easter Holiday period, pennings of pigs during April were fairly heavy and the monthly aggregate (9,308 head) was slightly in excess of the total submitted at auction during March. Receipts by rail accounted for 6,456 and an additional 180 were sold by private treaty.

Irregular market for baconers.

Baconers were well supplied and, as usual, heavy to extra heavy descriptions were well in evidence. On the final sale day, however, there was a noticeable falling-off in the number of good quality sorts available.

The market during the month was most irregular. Short supplies at opening caused values to rise to the highest level for some time and rates per lb. exceeded $9\frac{1}{2}$ d in many instances. At the following sale, values receded but the market subsequently recovered only to fall to the lowest point for some time owing to the accumulation of bacon pigs awaiting slaughter at the Abattoirs. At closing, equivalent rates per lb. on occasions were as low as $7\frac{3}{4}$ d.

Strong demand for backfatters.

Backfatter supplies were very irregular, being limited at times and moderate on other occasions. The proportion of prime heavy descriptions also fluctuated.

A strong demand was evident, particularly during the latter half of the period, and both light and heavy lines sold to 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d per lb. Boars continued to sell at enhanced rates and £15.9.6 was paid for a particularly heavy animal.

Store pigs cheaper.

Porkers, for the most part, were well represented, and included all grades of weight and quality with fair to good trade medium to heavy weights predominating. The market was irregular and although good quality small store pigs sold to 14d per lb. at opening, the highest price noted at the close of April was 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ d.

With the advent of cooler weather, store buyers showed a disinclination to buy freely, particularly small pigs which are a bigger risk in the winter months, being more liable to contract diseases.

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WHEAT IMPORTATIONS

Owing to the drought conditions which have prevailed throughout New South Wales over an extended period, it has been found necessary to arrange for the importation to this State of wheat from other States.

The total quantity of wheat imported up to 10th May, including wheat awaiting unloading, was approximately 1,782,499 bushels.

The supplying States are South Australia and Western Australia.