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SALES OF LIVESTOCK AT HOMEBUSH, SYDNEY.Increased supplies of sheep and lambs.

Total consignments of sheep and lambs during October showed an increase of approximately 48,000, receipts amounting to 317,154 head. The increase in offerings was almost solely accounted for by lambs and suckers as supplies of grown sheep showed a further falling-off.

Sheep quality improves.

The general quality of the sheep penned for sale showed some improvement, a large proportion comprising shorn descriptions of mostly good to prime grade. Light trade sorts were well supplied while good heavy sheep were also well supplied.

Only occasional consignments of woolly sheep were submitted and quality was not up to the standard of those "off shears". Supplies for the period totalled 139,198 head or some 13,000 head fewer than the previous month's aggregate.

Values fluctuate.

Although a generally steady demand ruled, values fluctuated over the period according to supplies and the reduction in the wholesale coiling rates of mutton were also reflected. At early sales, most classes of sheep were from 1/- to 2/- per head dearer but later auctions were marked by a decline ranging from 2/- to 3/- per head. Realisations were better at closing sales when rates advanced by from 1/- to 1/6 but despite this improvement mutton was substantially lower in price than during the previous month. In September, rates reached 7½d per lb. as against 5½d in the period under review, whilst for the most part good heavy wethers sold at 4d to 4½d and occasionally 5d with light descriptions making 4½d to 4¾d and occasionally to 5½d per lb. Ewes realised to 5½d per lb. last month but at the October auctions heavy grades were obtained at 3½d to 4½d with light ewe mutton worth 3½d to 4½d per lb. Good quality wethers in the wool sold to 30/- per head, and shorn descriptions to 30/- while a line of good quality ewes realised 32/- per head.

Suckers in heavier supply.

Little material change was apparent in the number of summer lambs offered but suckers showed a considerable increase. Aggregate yardings for the period were 177,956 or 61,000 head more than was forward for sale in September.

Quality for the most part was very fair to good with prime heavy grades moderately well represented, but towards the end of the month many lines of suckers showed a tendency to dry off and lose their bloom.

All grades of lamb cheaper.

Lambs and suckers sold at lower price levels although in common with grown sheep values showed some irregularity. The reduced culling price amounting to from $\frac{5}{4}$ d to 1d per lb. from the 1st October, together with a further reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ d per lb. as from 22nd October were mainly responsible for the decline. The benefit of the reduced wholesale culling rates was passed on to the consumer with corresponding reductions of from 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 2d per lb. in the various retail cuts.

The market showed some improvement at opening, increases ranging from 1/- to 1/6 per head being evident. Later, however, prices declined by from 3/- to 4/- per head, although some recovery in realisations occurred at the closing sales.

In the previous month operators paid up to 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d and 10d per lb. for heavy and light grades respectively, but during October heavy lambs and suckers were obtained at from 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d to 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d and light at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d per lb.

Heavy cattle supplies.

Cattle consignments during October, 1945, were steady but the numbers coming forward showed a substantial increase. The pinnings aggregated 19,557 head, including 1,634 auctioned in the store section. This total was the highest for the month of October since 1939. It has become necessary for the Railway Department to ration the number of trucks allotted for the carriage of stock.

The general standard of quality was most variable being good on occasions, particularly during the early part of the month, but only fair on other occasions. The proportion of grown stock available also showed considerable variation. For the most part lightweights greatly predominated. A substantial proportion of the heavier beasts offered was of good trade to prime quality but prime grade lightweights were fairly scarce.

Bullocks cheaper.

Truckings of bullocks were variable but they generally comprised all grades of weight. Good trade descriptions formed the bulk of supplies but prime lots were well represented, especially among the heavyweights.

The market generally was cheaper and at the close lightweights were quoted at from 49/- to 52/- per 100 lb. Rates for prime medium weights, however, ranged to 53/-.

Quality of steers declines.

Steers made a particularly good showing during the first half of the period and many prime lines were noticed. The offerings, subsequently, were somewhat disappointing, small fair trade sorts predominating while prime boasts were scarce.

The market was firm at opening when quotations ranged from 52/- to 57/- per 100 lb. Values later, although irregular, were lower, closing rates ranging from 48/- to 53/- per 100 lb.

Poor demand for over-fat cows.

Cows were lightly supplied early in the period but truckings later increased considerably. All grades of weight and quality were submitted, including over-fat lines. The latter met a very poor demand.

Values were fairly well maintained during the first half of the month when rates ranged to 51/- per 100 lb. During the third week, however, prices receded, quotations at closing ranging from 34/- to 45/- per 100 lb.

Light heifers well supplied.

Heifers were fairly well supplied on most sale days although lightweights greatly predominated and the proportion of prime sorts was small. The market weakened progressively and while rates were as high as 55/- per 100 lb. at opening quotations at closing were from 42/- to 47/-.

Prime vealers scarce.

Vealers were well represented and comprised chiefly fair to good trade medium weights. Prime sorts were very scarce throughout the month. Vealers maintained their value better than other classes and variations in price were not marked, except during the final week when quotations ranged from 51/- to 58/- per 100 lb. The highest equivalent rate noted was 63/- per 100 lb.

Pig supplies maintained.

Supplies of pigs during the period under review were well maintained and the total submitted at auction was 9,558 head, of which 5,830 were received by rail. An additional 469 were disposed of by private treaty. Consignments during the early part of the period were fairly light but they were much more substantial subsequently.

Extra heavy baconers in demand.

Baconers were well supplied and comprised all grades of weight with extra heavy descriptions making a particularly good

showing. Quality varied considerably, being only fair at times but very satisfactory on other occasions.

The market throughout was fairly steady and the bulk of the sales was effected at rates equivalent to $8\frac{3}{4}$ d to $9\frac{1}{4}$ d per lb. On a per head basis, prices ranged chiefly to £7.10.6. Demand for extra heavy baconers estimated to dress more than 200 lb. continued to improve and in many instances the price per head quoted was exceeded. These pigs are utilised for tinned and pressed hams, also for small goods, as there is a shortage of heavier backfatters. Some months ago the Controller of Meat Supplies took action to reduce values of pigs dressing more than 200 lb. to schedule level but the Authorities have been lenient of late in view of the reduced supplies of pigmeat.

Backfatters dearer.

Backfatter consignments were most variable, supplies generally being very limited, although on one or two occasions both light and heavy descriptions were fairly plentiful. All grades of quality were represented and boars comprised a fair proportion of the offerings.

The market opened very firm and values ranged to $6\frac{5}{8}$ d per lb. for lightweights and $6\frac{1}{2}$ d for heavy sorts. Demand subsequently became very keen and values showed a progressive increase, closing sales being to $7\frac{1}{2}$ d per lb. The high price of £16.13.6 per head was paid on the final sale day for a heavy sow dressing over 600 lb.

High prices maintained for stores.

Perkers were fairly well supplied and for the most part comprised fair to good trade medium to heavy weight descriptions. The consignments included many pigs suitable for purchase as stores. These met keen competition from local feeders who, in order to fulfil requirements, were obliged to purchase perkors which normally would not be regarded as stores.

Average values were about equal to those of September, rates for lightweights ranging to $13\frac{5}{8}$ d per lb. and those for heavier sorts to 12d per lb.

(G.C. Coloman and
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