

Chapter 13

AGRICULTURE

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Chapter 13

AGRICULTURE

While a variety of new crops such as blueberry, pyrethrum, buckwheat, and essential oils have been introduced to Tasmania in recent years, the mainstay of the State's agricultural industry continues to be wool, fat lambs, beef, dairying, and vegetable growing.

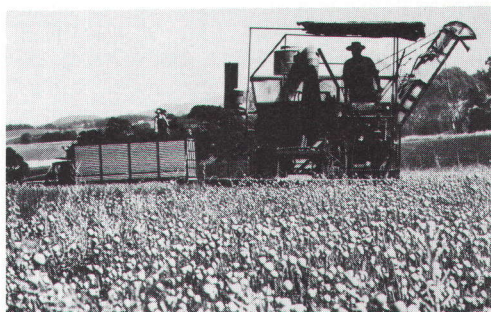
In the year 1987-88 the value added by the industry was just under \$182 million, only \$26 million less than that contributed by the mining industry. Almost 66 per cent was contributed by livestock and livestock products, of which half was attributable to dairying.

At 31 March 1988 there were 3499 establishments in Tasmania with an estimated value of agricultural output of \$20 000 or over. Of these, 3434 were classified to the agricultural industry (i.e. their main productive activity was agricultural production). Most of the agricultural establishments are owner-operated or family partnerships. Very few are operated as limited liability companies.

13.1 VALUE OF AGRICULTURE

Based on information from the annual agricultural finance survey, the per capita net worth of Tasmanian agricultural enterprises at 30 June 1988 was \$692 000.

This comparatively low value (only Victoria had a lower per capita net worth of agriculture establishments - \$666 000) is partly a reflection of the generally smaller scale of agricultural operations in Tasmania compared with other States. The per capita net indebtedness for Tasmanian agricultural enterprises at 30 June



Harvesting oil poppies near Lower Barrington.

Photo: Advocate

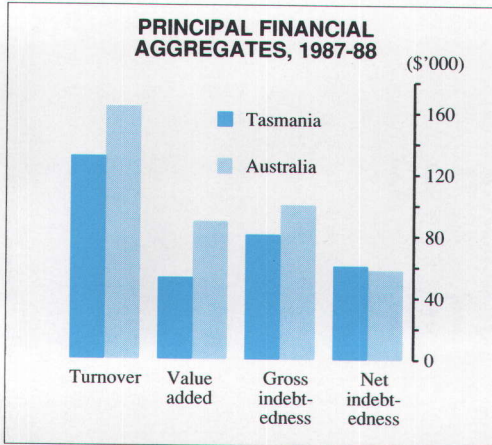
13.1 MAIN FINANCIAL AGGREGATES TASMANIAN AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES, 1987-88

	Amount (\$m)	Per agricultural enterprise (\$'000)
Turnover (a)	451.4	131.7
Value added	181.9	53.1
Value of assets (b)	2 650.9	773.3
Gross indebtedness	277.1	80.8
Net indebtedness (c)	209.0	61.0
Net worth	2 373.7	692.4

(a) Turnover and figures derived from it (such as value added), includes receipts from non-agricultural activities of agricultural enterprises (e.g. cartage revenue).

(b) Includes value of land, buildings, farm equipment, livestock.

(c) Gross indebtedness less the value of financial assets.



1988 was \$61 000. The national average per capita net indebtedness was \$58 300.

During 1987-88, 43 per cent of turnover was derived from the sale of livestock products. Virtually all of this was accounted for by the sale of wool and milk. Nationally, only 32 per cent of turnover came from livestock and products. The relatively high percentage of turnover attributable to the sale of livestock products points to the importance of dairying in the State's agricultural

industry. Nearly 45 per cent of turnover from livestock products was attributable to the milk cattle industry (i.e. principally the sale of milk). Sales from crops in Tasmania were 22 per cent of total turnover; nationally the proportion was 35 per cent. The national proportion is boosted by the sales of cereal grains - principally wheat and to a far lesser extent barley.

Wheat and barley are insignificant in the Tasmanian scene - the principal contributors being vegetable crops and orchard fruit. The other big contributor to Tasmanian agricultural turnover was sales of livestock. Just under 25 per cent of turnover came from this source in 1987-88. The national proportion was much the same. The two main contributors to both the State and national totals were sales of sheep and cattle.

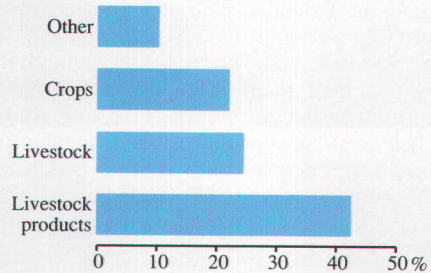
Total turnover increased to \$451.4 million in 1987-88, 16 per cent above 1986-87 turnover. The component which showed the strongest increase was sales from livestock products. This was due to the very strong prices that prevailed for wool during 1987-88; average auction prices were 72 per cent above average auction prices during 1986-87.

13.2 SELECTED FINANCIAL STATISTICS, TASMANIA (\$m)

	1986-87	1987-88
Turnover-		
Sales from crops	103.9	100.4
Sales from livestock	121.4	111.4
Sales from livestock products	136.3	192.8
Rent and leasing revenue (other than land)	2.0	2.7
Miscellaneous	25.5	44.1
Total	389.0	451.4
Less -		
Purchases and selected expenses	205.7	243.3
Value added (a)	117.2	181.9
Less -		
Rates and taxes	5.1	6.2
Insurance payments	6.1	7.4
Other expenses	11.1	12.8
Adjusted value added (a)	95.0	155.5
Less -		
Wages, salaries and supplements	47.3	55.2
Gross operating surplus	47.7	100.3

(a) Includes an estimate for the value of the increase (decrease) in the value of livestock not shown separately.

TURNOVER COMPONENTS, TASMANIA, 1987-88



13.3 GROSS VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES, TASMANIA (\$m)

	1986-87	1987-88
Crops (a)	145.0	188.2
Livestock slaughterings and other disposals	111.5	120.0
Livestock products	180.4	239.1
Total agriculture	436.9	547.2

(a) Excludes crops and pasture harvested for green feed or silage.

13.2 LAND USE

There were 3504 establishments involved in commercial agricultural activities in Tasmania in 1987-88. There were a further 1700 sub-commercial establishments involved in limited agricultural activities in 1987-88.

Commercial agricultural establishments occupied 27 per cent of Tasmania's area. Just under 50 per cent of the area of commercial agricultural establishments was under sown pasture or used for crops (cereals, fruit, vegetables, etc). The balance (around 950 000 hectares) was semi-cleared land, bush or fallow and used for rough grazing, forestry or not utilised at all.

13.4 AGRICULTURAL LAND USE, TASMANIA ('000 ha)

Area	1986-87	1987-88
Crops -		
Cereals for -		
Grain	19.2	19.9
Other purposes	14.6	15.8
Legumes	2.0	1.6
Fruit	3.2	3.1
Vegetables	16.7	16.9
Other	22.3	27.1
Total crops	77.9	84.5
Sown pasture	832.4	832.3
Total area of agricultural establishments (a)	1 872.8	1 870.5

(a) Includes area used for 'rough grazing', forestry or not utilised for any specific purpose.

An important agricultural activity is livestock grazing. Eighty per cent of establishments carried cattle (milk or meat) and fifty-five per cent grazed sheep. This combination of meat cattle and sheep grazing is popular in Tasmania; about twenty-five per cent of establishments combine these two activities.

In 1987-88 just over 28 per cent of agricultural establishments carried dairy cattle. However, this was a considerable fall from 10 years earlier when around 38 per cent of agricultural establishments carried cattle for milk.

13.5 AGRICULTURAL ESTABLISHMENTS ACCORDING TO PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES, TASMANIA, 1987-88

Agricultural Activity	Establishments (Number)	Proportion of all holdings (%)
Establishments growing -		
Cereals for grain -		
Wheat	87	2.5
Barley	408	11.6
Vegetables for human consumption -		
Beans, French and runner for processing	147	4.2
Carrots	44	1.3
Onions	143	4.1
Peas for processing	424	12.1
Potatoes	588	16.8
Any vegetables for human consumption	833	23.8
Orchard fruit -		
Apples	209	6.0
Establishments carrying -		
Milk cattle	1 001	28.6
Meat cattle	2 609	74.5
Pigs	176	5.0
Sheep	1 938	55.3

13.3 CROPS

The principal cropping activity on Tasmanian farms is growing vegetables for human consumption. This is the major cropping activity in terms of both farm area used and value of products.

Most of the vegetable cropping is done along the north-west coastal strip. The area is characterised by deep friable krasnozem soil types and relatively high (900 mm to 1400 mm) and reliable rainfall. The other main vegetable growing area is in the north-east around Scottsdale. Soil and climate conditions are similar to the north-west coastal belt.

Most of the vegetable cropping in Tasmania is for processing. Farmers grow crops such as beans, peas, potatoes under contract to processing companies. Some of the crops are exported interstate and some are sold on the local fresh market. A local Tasmanian company has developed an expanding European export market for onions. This is the reason for the

13.6 AREA OF PRINCIPAL CROPS, TASMANIA (ha)

<i>Crops</i>	1986-87	1987-88
Cereals for grain -		
Barley	8 487	8 024
Oats	7 765	9 560
Wheat	1 729	1 179
Vegetables for human consumption -		
Beans, French and runner for processing	1 335	1 187
Onions	732	980
Peas (green) for processing	6 708	6 205
Potatoes	5 744	6 380
Total vegetables (a)	16 680	16 921
Orchard fruit -		
Apples	2 615	2 579
Total orchard fruit (a)	2 843	2 787
Hops	854	821
Cereal crops for green feed or silage	13 205	13 251

marked increase in area planted to this crop over recent years. In the early 1980s around 550 hectares were planted to this crop. By the end of the 1980s the area had almost doubled to around the 1000 hectare mark.

In both value and area, potatoes are one of the principal crops grown by Tasmanian farmers. The area planted to potatoes has been over 6000 hectares in both 1987-88 and 1988-89. Potatoes are the highest value of all crops - in 1987-88 the value of the potato crop was \$42.9 million.

13.7 GROSS VALUE OF CROPS, TASMANIA (a) (\$m)

	1986-87	1987-88
Cereals for grain	5.9	6.7
Legumes mainly for grain	0.8	0.8
Crops for hay	0.7	1.5
Orchard fruit	29.0	37.3
Berry and small fruit	0.9	1.0
Grapes	0.4	0.6
Vegetables for human consumption	62.3	85.3
Other crops	18.8	28.1
Pasture harvested	26.2	27.0
Total	145.0	188.3

(a) Excludes crops and pasture harvested for hay, green feed or silage.

This was some seven million dollars above the value of the apple crop.

A traditional Tasmanian crop is hops. They used to be grown in numerous small plots throughout the Derwent Valley. However, with the introduction of new high yielding varieties and mechanical harvesting in place of hand picking, hop growing has undergone substantial change. Hops are now grown in larger lots suited to mechanical harvesting. As well significant areas in the north-east and north-west have been planted to the crop. These changes have maintained Tasmania's position as the main grower state; around 75 per cent of the Australian total area is grown in Tasmania.

A characteristic of the vegetable growing industry, as with other agricultural activities is the dominance of large producers. This is in part attributable to the high capital cost involved in equipment needed in the industry. In 1987-88 just under six per cent of establishments growing vegetables for human consumption grew at most 26 per cent of the area of vegetables. A further seven per cent of growers accounted at most 18 per cent of the vegetable area.

13.3.1 Potatoes

Tasmania produces in the order of 20 per cent of the Australian potato crop. Most are grown



Harvesting potatoes.

Photo: Mercury

under contract to vegetable processors and are turned into potato "chips". In recent years the potato crop has been the most valuable single agricultural crop produced by Tasmanian farmers accounting for eight to 10 per cent of the total gross value of all agricultural production.

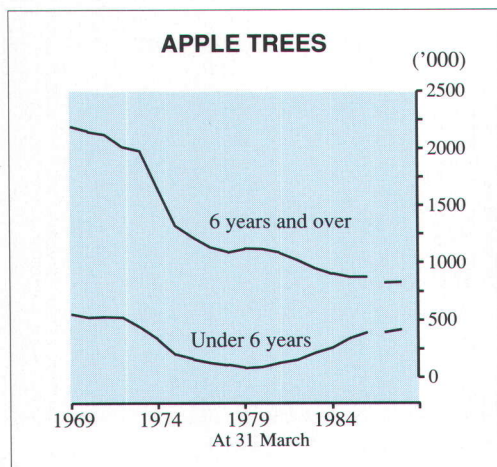
13.8 POTATOES, TASMANIA

Year	Area (hectares)	Production ('000 tonnes)
1983-84	5 203	213
1984-85	5 209	203
1985-86	4 777	193
1986-87	5 744	223
1987-88	6 380	248

Most of the potato crop is grown along the north-west coastal strip stretching from the municipality of Latrobe to Circular Head. Like many other agricultural activities potato growing is dominated by large producers. The largest 13 per cent of growers accounted for 38 per cent of the area of potatoes grown.

13.3.2 Apple Industry

Tasmania is still referred to by many as the *Apple Isle*. This was once an accurate reflection of the importance of apple orcharding to the



State's economy and agricultural industry. Apples contributed around 15 per cent to the total gross value of agricultural production and were one of the State's major overseas exports. Apple orcharding was based on overseas exports to Europe, in particular the United Kingdom. About 75 per cent of the crop went overseas and nearly all to European countries.

Apples are still important to the Tasmanian agricultural industry. They remain one of the two most significant crops in value terms and account for around seven per cent of the gross value of all agriculture. About 20 per cent of the crop is exported overseas of which one third to 40 per cent is exported to Asian markets.

13.9 APPLES, TASMANIA

Year	Number of trees ('000)	Production ('000 tonnes)
1983-84	1 163	56.8
1984-85	1 218	61.6
1985-86	1 256	57.0
1986-87	1 218	48.1
1987-88	1 251	52.9



Apples.

Photo: Mercury

TASMANIAN VITICULTURE *

Tasmania's first vineyards predated those of both Victoria and South Australia. The first vine cuttings taken to both South Australia and Victoria came from Port Arthur. Tasmania's first vineyards were planted in what is now the suburb of New Town by Broughton in 1823. These were taken over by Captain Swanston and apparently, according to the Hobart press, produced wine of exceptional character.

In 1850 Swanston died and his vineyards suffered the same fate. In the 1880s Bernacchi planted a vineyard on Maria Island. This also failed.

Nothing further occurred until 1956 when Jean Miguet planted a small vineyard south of Launceston. No encouragement was given by the Government and local hostility greeted Miguet's innovation. The next attempt was made by Claudio Alcorso who established his Moorilla Estate in what is now a part of the northern suburbs of Hobart. The Moorilla Estate, set up in 1958 is the oldest producing vineyard in Tasmania and is renowned for quality wines. Through Alcorso's foresight, success and encouragement, others have entered the Tasmanian viticulture industry. Although small, the Tasmanian vineyards, have gained a reputation for wines of outstanding quality.

Another pioneering effort in the Tasmanian viticulture industry was by the Pirie brothers (Andrew and David) who established the Pipers Brook vineyard north of Launceston in

1975. (One of the founding brothers, Andrew, was Australia's first PhD in vine physiology.) The adjacent Heemskirk Vineyard was established the following year. These two vineyards are the largest operating in Tasmania.

Tasmanian wine producers are committed to quality production and protection of Tasmania's name for producing high quality wines. This commitment of producers is backed by legislation which empowers the Licensing Board to monitor production, bottling and labelling. Buyers of Tasmanian wines are guaranteed through the appellation controls, that the bottle of wine is what the label claims it to be. Appellation controls came into force at the beginning of the 1986 growing season.

**This article is based on information provided by the Tasmanian Development Authority.*

13.10 AREA OF VINEYARDS AND GRAPE PRODUCTION

Variety	1986-87	1987-88
Red grapes -		
Bearing (ha)	20	21
Non-bearing (ha)	30	19
Total (ha)	50	40
Production (t)	48	89
White grapes -		
Bearing (ha)	23	24
Non-bearing (ha)	23	14
Total (ha)	46	38
Production (t)	100	122



Vineyard.
Photo: Mercury

13.4 LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS

Cattle and sheep are the mainstay of Tasmanian agriculture. Sales of livestock and livestock products account for 65 to 70 per cent of the gross value of Tasmanian agriculture.

13.4.1 Sheep

Despite the diversity of Tasmanian agriculture, sheep are the biggest contributor to the value of Tasmanian agricultural production. Together wool and sales of sheep (for slaughtering and export) contribute an average 40 per cent of the gross value of Tasmanian agricultural output. In recent years this proportion has been somewhat higher due to the buoyant wool prices experienced.

13.11 SHEEP NUMBERS AND WOOL PRODUCTION, TASMANIA

Year	Sheep numbers ('000) (a)	Shorn wool production (tonnes)
1983-84	4 583.3	20 085
1984-85	4 780.1	20 295
1985-86 (b)	4 822.5	20 427
1986-87	4 954.0	20 449
1987-88	4 746.4	19 317

(a) At 31 March. (b) Relates to agricultural establishments with estimated value of agricultural operations of \$20 000 or more; earlier years agricultural establishments with estimated value of agricultural operations of \$5000 or more.

Live Sheep Exports

The overseas live sheep export trade which has developed since the early 1970s is of considerable value to Tasmanian sheep farmers. The exports are to middle-east Islamic nations. Initially, Iran was the main destination but more recently Saudi Arabia and neighbouring Persian Gulf nations have become important markets. The first shipment of sheep was in 1972-73 when 15 500 sheep were sent to Saudi Arabia. Initially exports were mainly aged wethers but in more recent times the exports have included younger sheep.

13.12 LIVE SHEEP EXPORTS FROM TASMANIA TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Year	No. of sheep ('000)	Value (\$m)
1984-85	143.0	3.06
1985-86	255.4	5.41
1986-87	299.3	6.65
1987-88	201.5	4.95
1988-89 p	273.3	6.86

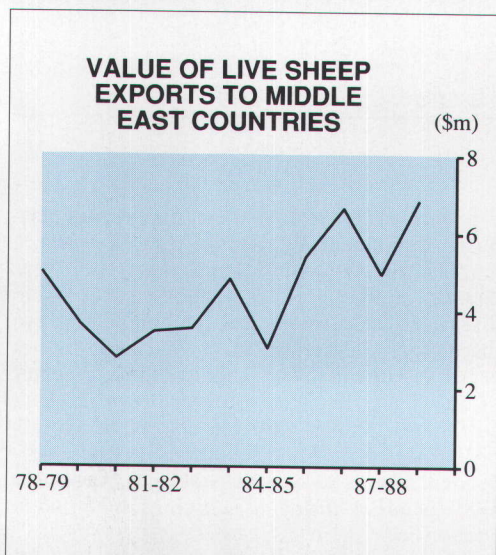
In mid-1989 the live sheep export was seriously threatened by Saudia Arabia when a number of shipments from Australia were banned on the grounds that the sheep were diseased. The diseases that the Saudia Arabian inspection claimed to have detected do not occur in Australia. The shipments refused entry to Saudia Arabia were directed to other Arab gulf states. Due to possible effects on exports of live sheep to other countries, Australia suspended exports to Saudia Arabia in September 1989 pending further discussions with Saudi au thorities.



Live sheep exports.

Photo: Mercury

Loss of the live sheep export trade would be a substantial blow to Tasmanian sheep farmers. The majority of Tasmania's live sheep have gone to Saudi Arabia. The trade has returned to Tasmanian sheep farmers in the order of \$5.5 million to \$6.5 million.



Composition of the Sheep Flock

The structure of Tasmania's sheep flock has been fairly stable over the past two decades. The main change has been in the proportion of wethers, kept for wool production which dropped from around 25 per cent in the 1970s to about 20 per cent in the early 1980s. It has since climbed back up to around the 25 per cent level. The recovery in the proportion of wethers is a reflection of buoyant wool prices experienced throughout the 1980s.

13.13 FLOCK COMPOSITION, TASMANIA (At 31 March)

Type of sheep	1988	
	('000)	(%)
Rams	48.3	1.0
Breeding ewes	2 082.0	43.9
Other ewes	181.5	3.8
Wethers	1 180.0	24.9
Lambs and hoggets	1 254.7	26.4
Total	4 746.4	100.0

Wool

Tasmania has gained a reputation in the international wool market as a producer of top quality fine merino fleeces. Tasmanian producers have regularly held the record price for fine merino wool sold at auction. However, in terms of the overall fleece sold, the proportion of Tasmanian wool falling into the very fine category (20 microns or finer) is below the national level. This is a reflection of the different breed structure of the Tasmanian flock. A smaller proportion is merino than for the national flock.

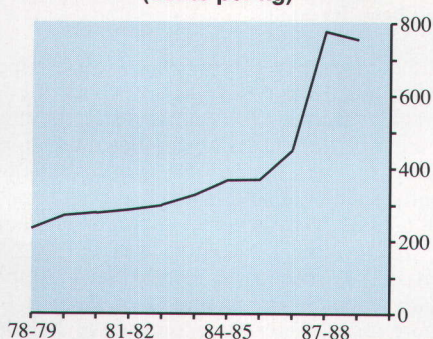
13.14 SHORN WOOL PRODUCTION AND VALUE OF ALL WOOL, TASMANIA

Year	Shorn wool (tonnes)	Value (a) (\$m)
1982-83	19 804	58.9
1983-84	20 085	64.7
1984-85	20 295	73.3
1985-86 (a)	20 427	83.7
1986-87	20 449	108.7
1987-88	19 317	162.4

(a) Relates to agricultural establishments with estimated value of agricultural operations of \$20 000 or more; earlier years agricultural establishments with estimated value of agricultural operations of \$5000 or more.

The average price of wool sold at Tasmanian auctions in 1987-88 was more than treble the level a decade earlier. During October 1988 when 20 000 bales were sold, the average auction price reached 929 cents per kilogram. At the next main sales in December and February (when 23 300 and 32 900 bales were sold respectively) average prices had eased back to 810

AVERAGE PRICE OF GREASY WOOL SOLD AT TASMANIAN AUCTION (cents per kg)



cents per kilogram and then dropped further to 746 cents in February.

However, at the February wool sales a world record auction price for superfine merino wool of 300 850 cents per kilogram was established when a Japanese firm purchased a 100 kilogram bale of wool. Fujii Keori and two Italian firms, Lanificio Titanus and Loro Piana contested the bidding for the 100 kilogram bale from Connorville, near Cressy.

The record price was more than ten times the previous record.



*Mr Kenroku Fujii
outbidding competi-
tion at wool sales.
Photo: Mercury*

THE SHEEP AND WOOL CONGRESS

Tasmania hosted the second World Sheep and Wool Congress in February-March 1989. The Congress was opened in Hobart at the Wrest Point Casino by Princess Anne on 27 February. It then moved to Launceston on 2 March for a week of activities.

The event, which attracted some 1000 industry delegates and a further 500 trade delegates from almost 20 countries, was a major international coup for the Tasmanian sheep and wool industry. Tasmanian industry representatives secured the Congress ahead of competitors following the initial Congress in Canada in 1986. Congress organisers put two years' planning into the event to ensure that all went smoothly.

Hosting the Congress focused international attention on Tasmania's important sheep industry and its internationally recognised fine merino wool production. Nations represented at the Congress included Argentina, Canada,

China, Japan, New Zealand, The Soviet Union, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America. Each Australian State was represented by delegates.

The Congress not only focused upon wool production but also on sheep meat production. It provided an unique opportunity for breeders from around the world to discuss and exchange information. As well it brought together producers and buyers to establish important trade contacts.

The Congress was expected to inject around \$2 million to \$3 million into the State's economy.



*Conference dinner.
Photo: Examiner*

Sheep and Lambs Slaughtered

While wool is the most valuable product from the sheep industry, sheep and lambs slaughtered for meat also contribute substantially to the estimated value of agricultural production. Between \$17 million and \$19 million is added annually to the value of agriculture from slaughterings. A considerable part of the meat produced is exported overseas. In recent years about 1.1 million to 1.3 million sheep have been slaughtered providing between 19 000 and 22 000 tonnes of meat annually.

13.15 SHEEP AND LAMBS SLAUGHTERED, TASMANIA ('000)

Year ended 30 June	Sheep	Lambs
1984	418.9	756.9
1985	427.3	683.9
1986	466.6	665.7
1987	509.7	670.6
1988	630.0	656.0

13.4.2 Cattle

One of the most common agricultural activities is grazing cattle for meat. This activity is frequently undertaken as an adjunct to other major activities such as sheep farming, dairying or cropping. In the order of 70 to 75 per cent of agricultural establishments carry some cattle for meat purposes.

13.16 CATTLE NUMBERS, TASMANIA ('000)

At 31 March	Cattle for meat	Cattle for milk
1984	393.6	147.3
1985	405.1	147.5
1986 (a)	368.6	139.9
1987	395.3	138.9
1988	407.7	134.0

(a) Relates to agricultural establishments with estimated value of agricultural operations of \$20 000 or more; earlier years agricultural establishments of \$5000 or more.

Meat cattle as a side-line activity is illustrated by the fact that almost 50 per cent of establishments with meat cattle carry under 10 per

cent of the meat cattle herd and less than five per cent of agricultural establishments with meat cattle carrying over 30 per cent of meat cattle.

13.17 CATTLE AND CALVES SLAUGHTERED, TASMANIA ('000)

Year ended 30 June	Cattle	Calves
1985	147.1	38.2
1986	143.2	32.2
1987	172.8	32.2
1988	181.9	35.6
1989	161.1	40.5

Dairying remains an important part of agricultural activity in Tasmania. Dairy products contribute approximately 15 per cent of the total value of agricultural production. However, over the past two to three decades the dairy industry has undergone major change.

The number of milk cattle has fallen by over 45 per cent while the number of establishments involved in the dairy industry has fallen by almost 80 per cent. While some of this decrease is due to a change in classification, most is due to a real fall in establishments in dairying.



A contraction of the United Kingdom export market was the initial catalyst in the fall. Further pressure came from increasing production costs relative to returns and the need for large scale production to remain viable.

Over the two decades the median size of the milk cattle herd has increased from 40 to almost 100.

13.18 PIGS, TASMANIA (’000)

Year	Number (a)	Slaughtered (b)
1983-84	80.2	80.2
1984-85	83.1	83.1
1985-86 (c)	42.1	84.4
1986-87	46.1	89.6
1987-88	47.6	97.5

(a) Number reported on establishments in scope of the agricultural census. (b) All pigs slaughtered at abattoirs. (c) Relates to agricultural establishments with estimated value of agricultural operations of \$20 000 or more; earlier years agricultural establishments of \$2500.

Most of the dairy herd is located in the north-west of the State. The local government area of Circular Head has just on 30 per cent of the State’s dairy cattle.

13.4.3 Other Livestock

Principal other livestock farming activities include pig farming, poultry and on a few establishments goats and deer.

Pig farming has undergone similar changes to other farming activities - increasingly specialised and large scale operation.

DEER FARMING VIABLE IN TASMANIA

Deer have been in Tasmania almost since the first days of white settlement, but it’s only in recent times they have been regarded as a viable agricultural industry.

Introduced to the State in 1829 by Captain Anthony Fenn Kemp and Captain Dumaresq, the first imports were from India. However, they were unable to acclimatise to local conditions and appeared to die out (some suggestions were that a few of the Indian Chitals did eventually interbreed with fallow deer).

The fallow deer - the species being farmed in Tasmania - were brought in by the Gatenby and Bisdee families in 1836. Well suited to the Tasmanian environment, the deer have gone on to number about 20 000 and are dispersed through a wide area of the State.

Although the feral deer population grew in the State’s mainly pastoral districts from the middle part of last century on, it wasn’t till 1978 that it was decided to put the farming of them into practice. In that year Mr O’Connor, of Connorville, Cressy, submitted an application to trap wild deer on his property and establish a deer farm.

A draft policy on deer farming was drawn up among various government, agricultural, hunting and semi-government organisations, on the farming of the animals, and this was presented to the State Government in 1979. It was subsequently endorsed, allowing for a small number of farms (five to six) to be set up and 1200 wild deer were caught to provide foundation stock. There are now about 49



Deer farming.

Photo: Mercury

licensed deer farms in Tasmania which carry an average herd of 120 does.

Deer farmers are achieving fawning rates of about 90 per cent. The doe fawns are retained for breeding and the buck fawns go to the venison trade.

The venison market continues to grow at a steady rate and Tasmanian deer meat is gradually replacing the imported product on restaurant tables.

Female fawns are still sought within the State as farms upgrade and improve herd sizes and new breeders come into the industry.

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