

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

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PRESS NOTICE

WINDSOR MAKES NEW HISTORY

The King's Example in War-Time Food Production

The King's farm at Windsor provides an outstanding example of British Agriculture at war. The scale of food production is symbolic of the industry's finest achievements and adaptability, milk production being maintained at the pre-war level on war-time stock rations, while a large area of grassland has been ploughed to grow food for human consumption.

Of the total of 541 acres, 300 are now arable - three times the area ploughed in 1938. There are 109 acres of wheat, 70 acres of barley and 35 acres of oats, the remainder having been planted with potatoes and roots for stock feeding.

To assist the harvesting of this year's hay crop carriage horses have been used for mowing. Lawns have also been left for hay-making, many extra tons of fodder having been harvested in this way.

The two famous dairy herds - pedigree Jerseys and Shorthorns - are at full strength and the war-time need of more winter milk is being met by the late autumn calving of many of the cows. This planned husbandry is a model for every dairy farm in the Kingdom.

Shortage of feedingstuffs has meant that the beef herd has had to be reduced to a nucleus of breeding stock and the pedigree herd of Large White pigs also has been culled, kitchen waste from the Castle being its sole source of maintenance. Sheep are being folded on land due to be planted with wheat for next year's harvest but the poultry flock is a mere shadow of its old strength. The national policy of concentrating on essential livestock thus reaches its ideal at Windsor.

Labour problems, common to all farmers, have been met on the Royal Farm by the employment of three members of the Women's Land Army. Mr. A. Ritchie, the farm manager, has nothing but praise for their work.

DEER PARK PLOUGHED

In the adjoining Great Park a new page in the history of Royal Windsor has been turned. By command of His Majesty the Park has been given over to corn growing and before another season has passed its unrivalled beauty will provide the setting for a farm of 1,500 acres, two-thirds of which will be under arable crops.

The quantity of food already being grown here by the Commissioners of Crown Lands is sufficient to make this home of British Kings an appropriate illustration of the service which the whole of agriculture is rendering to the nation in its hour of greatest need. There are 330 acres of wheat, 147 acres of oats and blocks of barley, potatoes, roots, rape and clover seeds, making a total of 632 acres of new arable land.

The history of the Great Park shows that one large area now under wheat had not been ploughed for many centuries and there is now only one employee, Mr. G.H. Elsbury, who can recall previous arable cropping on the Norfolk Farm - one of two areas set aside by George III for farming operations. Mr. Elsbury an estate labourer, has worked in the Great Park for 52 years, his father also having had a long record of service.

DEER HERD REDUCED

Essential to the new development was the drastic curtailment of the liberties of the Windsor deer. Possibly the most famous herd in the world, it has been reduced by the King from 1,000 head to a breeding nucleus of just under 100, including fallow and red deer. They can no longer wander about at will for they are fenced in an area unsuitable for cultivation.

Before the war the Park was also grazed by 100 store cattle. This beef herd has now been increased to 300 Galloway and Aberdeen Angus crosses and half-bred Herefords.

All the common difficulties of war-time farming are experienced at Windsor and many uncommon problems also presented themselves. More than one local farmer shook his head when it became known that the Great Park was to be cultivated. "It won't grow anything", appeared to be the consensus of local opinion. When the crops began to grow it was thought that something extra-special had been done to restore fertility. And so it had - but it was not a liberal dosing of artificials. There were no spring dressings of any kind. The secret of success lay in the triple ploughing last summer. The land was well broken up for its new purpose.

UP TO THEIR KNEES IN WHEAT

From the rise on which the Cranbourne Tower stands the pre-war view was of a gently sloping and typically English parkland with ancient oaks and beeches standing guard over their young and cage-protected saplings. Venturesome deer would complete the picture of a placid countryside. The trees are still there, but they are "up to their knees" in wheat - the first arable crop ever to be grown in this particular corner of the Park and one of the finest to be **seen anywhere**.

BIGGEST WHEAT FIELD?

It is highly probable that the Commissioners this year will be able to claim the biggest single-field wheat harvest in the whole of Britain. Set down in the middle of the Park is an uninterrupted stretch of wheat a mile long and a mile across at its widest part. The famous Park trees remain in this sea of corn and not far away is "The Gallop" - the processional route from Windsor to Ascot.

The pattern of new history, woven into the most historical parkland in England, actually adds to the charm of its surroundings and it has been achieved by team work inspired by the King in his capacity of Chief Ranger.

Mr. E.H. Savill, Deputy Ranger to His Majesty and deputy surveyor of Windsor Park, is directing the detailed operations for the Commissioners and Mr. Robert Lindsay, peace-time head forester, has earned the admiration of the whole of the Windsor farming community for the excellence of his work as farm manager.

So Windsor demonstrates the worth of land as a weapon of war. The Royal Farm and the Great Park are indeed a royal cameo of the achievements of the British people.