

SOLDIERS TILL 12,000 ACRES OF WASTE LAND

Over 12,000 useless acres now yield food, thanks to the organisation of the Army Agricultural Scheme.

This Scheme, which was launched at the end of 1940 to undertake the cultivation of, as far as possible, all land occupied by the War Department, is now entering on its fourth season.

Its ramifications are too widespread and its products too varied and, of necessity, often grown in too small quantities, to enable accurate statistics to be kept as to the weights of the crops produced. But an idea of the scope and progress can be gauged from the fact that produce sold or consumed amounted to approximately 20,000 tons during the year ended December 31, 1943, and was valued at over £390,000 compared to £103,000 worth produced in the first year.

A few specially selected officers form the Administrative Staff and are responsible for the distribution of seeds, tools and fertilizers to military units and also for farming certain large tracts of land in the occupation of the War Department.

The majority of the produce is consumed on the site, in lieu of the normal rations of potatoes and vegetables issued to units by N.A.A.F.I. Any surplus is usually sold to N.A.A.F.I. for re-issue to other units in the district. Farm crops, such as wheat, barley, and oats, as well as livestock, are, however, sold through the normal channels in compliance with the regulations laid down by the Ministry of Food. Glasshouses in the gardens of requisitioned property have also been used to produce a considerable quantity of tomatoes.

There is a challenge cup for the best unit garden in each Command, and a trophy for the best unit garden in the country, which is presented each year. Units of the Canadian and U.S.A. forces also co-operate in the Scheme and last year one of the Command Cups was won by a Canadian unit.