

## LIVE-STOCK DIVISION.

Report of W. C. BARRY, Director.

It is pleasing to record that, in the absence of any seasonal extremes, the field-work of the Live-stock Division was carried out under favourable conditions during the year. The autumn growth and favourable winter enabled stock to be carried through in good condition. The result was an excellent lambing percentage throughout the country, and, the ewes being in good condition, there was a very low lambing loss from the common ewe diseases seen at this time of the year.

The same favourable remarks may be made in regard to dairy cows calving in good condition. Here, however, on account of the fact that the cows were in good condition and favoured with an early spring growth, it was not unexpected that the dairy-farmer would experience an increase in the number of cases of milk-fever at calving-time. There was a distinct increase in milk-fever in dairy cows in several districts, particularly Taranaki, Manawatu, and the Waikato districts. Although this disease increased and caused a considerable loss of dairy cows, it is preferable to see cows carried through in good condition, thus preventing a still more serious loss from debility, paralysis, and other calving troubles. In experienced hands, the treatment of cows affected with milk-fever resulted in many valuable animals being saved. Good results were obtained by many owners from the use of injections of calcium gluconate.

The production season, so far as fat lambs and dairy-produce are concerned, was favoured by a good grass season in most districts. The season as a whole was not marred by any serious outbreak of disease or any abnormal mortalities in stock. It may be remarked, however, that the position in regard to an outbreak of facial eczema was very carefully watched, as some slight cases were seen in several districts.

In regard to the breeding of horses, the Stallions Act and the regulations under the Remounts Encouragement Act were both in operation during the year.

The field staff assisted the Army Department in the inspection and procuring of horses for the various mounted units. The survey of the several districts and the inspection of the horses involved a considerable amount of extra work by the staff.

### HEALTH OF LIVE-STOCK.

#### HORSES.

The health of horses throughout the country has remained satisfactory during the year. Cases of strangles were reported from time to time in a few districts on isolated farms. In such cases there is little danger of the disease spreading; the main danger of the dissemination of the disease is the concentration of horses at centres such as mounted camps.

During these camps the disease gradually become more serious, although every care was taken to prevent affected animals arriving. Probably one of the main factors in the susceptibility of the camp horses was the general soft condition of the horses on their arrival. Lack of work in grass-fed horses and a change of climate and feed conditions appeared to increase susceptibility to the disease. The lack of condition in the horses also rendered them more liable to colds, which in turn further reduced the vitality of the animals.

*Horse-breeding.*—Prices for draught horses are still reported to be low, and it appears that the scarcity of labour makes it necessary to use tractors as much as possible. This position will probably remain, so long as fuel is available for the mechanical power, but, on the other hand, one would expect an increased demand for horses to enable owners to dispense with mechanized traction under the present conditions.

The operation of the Stallions Act should assist in the eventual elimination of the unsound stallion. So far, the Act applies only to the compulsory examination of the younger stallions—two- and three-year-old stallions—although many of the older stallions were examined for certificates of soundness the previous year.

In regard to the breeding of light horses, subsidies were again provided under the Remounts Encouragement Act. These subsidies enable the owners of approved mares to obtain the services of selected and approved stallions at reduced fees. The stallions were stationed at convenient centres in both Islands, and a total of 40 stallions were subsidized during the year 1940-41, compared with 39 in the previous year. The number of mares approved for service was 1,381, compared with 1,339 in the previous year. This service is still being well patronized.

Although some good reports have been received concerning foals produced under the subsidy scheme, some criticism has been raised in other districts. Favourable comment has been made in regard to many of the stallions used, but so far it has not been possible to exercise a close scrutiny or selection of the mares. A uniform type is not likely to be produced until Committees are able to exercise a more rigid selection of the breeding-mares. The use of old mares should be discouraged, as in this class the foaling percentage is low and the death rate at foaling-time comparatively high. Unfortunately, the number of mares offering does not allow of a strict selection in regard to type and other aspects.