

EXPORTATION OF STOCK

During the year under review the following animals were exported: cattle, 470; sheep, 2,842; pigs, 20; horses, 184. Of this total of 184 horses, the movement of thoroughbred horses to Australia accounted for 169 animals.

DAIRY INSPECTION

Dairy inspection has been maintained on all premises registered for the supply of milk and cream, with a view to ensuring the production of high-grade milk for human consumption. Producers have endeavoured to place a high-grade article on the market, and welcome advice when some temporary trouble is met with.

Very little building or improvements have been effected, owing to the extreme shortage of labour and material.

The standard of milk-production has been good, and premises and milking plants have been maintained in a satisfactory condition. It has been a practice to take samples of milk for sediment and other tests, in addition to samples taken by the Health Department. Wherever any sample has failed to stand up to test, the farm is visited, the faulty technique is traced down, and remedial measures are suggested to prevent a recurrence. Instruction in methods of clean-milk production is necessary at all seasons of the year, but particularly during the winter months of production, when sanitary conditions are more difficult to maintain. The various tests tend to show that the holders of temporary licences are the worst offenders during the winter months, when surroundings may not be good.

Many minor improvements have been effected in all districts. Better heating facilities have been provided to ensure adequate hot water for washing up and sterilization of machines and utensils. Improved water-supplies have been provided to assist in the cooling of milk, and many new and better cooling systems have been installed. All these factors tend to assist in placing a high-grade milk of good keeping-quality on the market.

POULTRY

A review of the activities of the Department in relation to the poultry industry is as follows:—

In the annual report for 1945–46 attention was drawn to two factors—namely, supplies of poultry-foods and building-materials—which were then limiting any expansion of poultry flocks, and the statement was made that no appreciable improvement in the egg-supply position could be anticipated until these two shortages ceased. Unfortunately for the consuming public and the poultry-producer alike, the shortage in essential poultry-foods has become intensified during the past twelve months. In consequence, there has been a marked shortage of eggs, particularly in the main cities, while poultry-producers have experienced one of the most difficult periods in the history of the poultry industry. There were, indeed, one or two occasions when it appeared that large and immediate reductions in the poultry population of the Dominion could not be avoided.

The poultry-food situation during the period under review, before which supplies of food were already limited, may be summarized as follows: in the spring of 1946 a decision was taken to raise the extraction rate of flour to 80 per cent., and immediately this was put into effect the poultry industry faced a loss of not less than 13,000 tons per annum of wheaten offals, principally pollard. Pollard manufactured after the change in the extraction rate of flour was also lowered appreciably in feeding-value. Immediately on top of this loss in food within the Dominion came news of the drought in the wheat-growing areas of Australia and the subsequent decision of the Commonwealth to cease the export of stock-meal (or ground wheat) to New Zealand. Substantial quantities of stock-meal were previously used to feed poultry, more particularly in the North Island. Finally, the world shortage of wheat placed limits upon the supplies of this grain from Australia. With knowledge of this train of events, it is not difficult to realize how acute the poultry-food situation became, and, furthermore, at a most critical period of the poultry-farmers' year—the breeding and rearing season.

After a careful survey of the position, and with the approval of the poultry industry through the New Zealand Poultry Board, it was decided to "pool" all available supplies of feeding-meals suitable for poultry and to manufacture standard poultry-mashes. Under the scheme introduced in September, 1946, and operating at present, these mashes are manufactured under licence and to formulæ laid down by the Department. Furthermore, all such mashes are subject to ceiling prices according to district. In composing the formulæ for these mashes, the Department was handicapped considerably by the