

Grass-staggers.—The incidence of this disease in dairy herds was low last spring. A better standard of dairy-cow husbandry, with more attention to the regular and balanced feeding of cows at and after calving, may have assisted very considerably. An adequate reserve of winter fodder ensures a standby, so that the farmer may meet spring conditions as they arise, whether these conditions be flush pasture growth or the reverse.

Milk-fever.—Milk-fever disease of dairy cows is now commonly recognized and responds readily to treatment. The incidence was low last spring, adequate fodder-supplies being a factor in balancing the spring-feed conditions. For similar reasons, the disease known as acetonæmia in dairy cows was also less evident.

Mortality caused by Poisoning.—Throughout the year numerous instances of stock dying after the ingestion of arsenic have been brought under notice. In many cases the field diagnosis has been confirmed at the laboratory. The careless handling of arsenical preparations on farms is still in evidence. Plant poisoning of stock has not been as prevalent as in former years.

Parasitic Disease of Young Cattle.—Partly because of a favourable season and partly because of the more intensive use of the drug phenothiazine, losses of young stock from worms have been well controlled. There is still need to improve the autumn and winter feeding of young dairy heifer calves if constitution in dairy herds is to be maintained.

SHEEP

A good winter was experienced in 1947, ewe flocks wintering particularly well. An excellent lambing percentage was common in all districts, lambing taking place in most favourable weather. During the early spring both ewes and lambs did well, but dry conditions later persisted to the extent that the lambs could not be finished off to the same degree as in other years. That applied in several districts, particularly on the east coast of the North Island and in many parts of Canterbury. The dry weather also retarded the growth of root crops, rape, and other catch crops normally used by farmers who specialize in the fattening of weaned lambs. Many lambs in store condition were sent to the saleyards because of scarcity of pasture and other feed. Though lamb numbers were high, the average weight of lambs sent forward for slaughter will probably be below that recorded last year.

The incidence of disease in young lambs was probably lower than that of other years, no serious mortalities being recorded at marking or tailing time. Losses caused by pulpy-kidney disease have been normal in all districts.

Shearing was carried out in most districts under ideal conditions, the fleece being even and well grown. Dipping was interfered with somewhat by the water-supply problem, which caused delay in some instances.

Following the use of some of the new dipping fluids, a type of lameness affecting a percentage of the dipped animals has been recorded. The nature of the lameness has been investigated and elucidated, and steps are being taken to effect changes so as to prevent a recurrence of similar trouble.

Control of parasites has been good, dipping solutions being highly satisfactory in this respect. Though some infested lines of sheep have been found at sales, inquiry showed that the animals had not been dipped.

Lymphadenitis.—This disease of sheep is of considerable importance in meat inspection, and its incidence in sheep from certain South Island districts requires careful observation. However, the percentage of carcasses found affected at abattoirs and meat-export works in Canterbury has decreased further. Infection was found in 4.98 per cent. of mutton carcasses in Canterbury in 1946-47, whereas in 1947-48 the figure was reduced to 3.64 per cent.