

Cattle.—The cattle enumeration taken in January, 1918, showed an increase of 294,235 head as compared with that of the previous year. The following table shows the numbers of the respective classes :—

Year.	Bulls (all Ages).	Dairy Cows.	Other Cattle.	Total.
1908	30,170	591,617	1,151,539	1,773,326
1911	40,870	633,733	1,345,568	2,020,171
1916	50,858	750,323	1,616,310	2,417,491
1917	49,930	777,439	1,747,861	2,575,230
1918	51,935	793,215	2,024,315	2,869,465

Swine.—The number of swine in the Dominion as revealed by the last enumeration showed a further marked reduction, a perusal of the figures for the last four years indicating a steady decrease. The figures are as follows : 1911, 348,754 ; 1916, 297,501 ; 1917, 283,770 ; 1918, 258,694.

Horses.—An enumeration of the horses in the Dominion taken in January, 1918, showed an increase of 4,450 as compared with the previous year, the figures being 378,050 and 373,600 respectively.

SLAUGHTER OF STOCK FOR EXPORT.

The arrangement whereby all beef, mutton, and lamb available for export is purchased by the Imperial Government has continued, and the later arrangement whereby the Imperial Government agreed to advance up to 75 per cent. of the value of all meat stored and waiting shipment has been of great value to producers and exporters alike. Owing to the prices being fixed for the duration of the agreement the fat-stock market has remained steady, but, unfortunately, the scarcity of shipping, causing the stores to become full, has produced some inconvenience through the inability of the meat-export companies to accept all the fat stock offering. This has not, however, been very serious, and the Dominion has benefited distinctly through the arrangement made originally in March, 1915, and continuing with the more advantageous concessions and increases granted from time to time.

As will be seen from the following table, a very substantial increase has taken place in the number of cattle, sheep, and lambs slaughtered at meat-export works (principally for export) during the twelve months ended 31st March, 1919, compared with the previous twelve months' slaughtering :—

	31st March, 1919.	31st March, 1918.	Increase.
Cattle	218,871	211,319	7,552
Sheep	3,690,152	2,968,269	721,883
Lambs	2,845,413	2,609,134	236,279

One additional meat-export slaughterhouse, that of the Wellington Meat Export Company, at Kakariki, near Marton, was completed during the year, and slaughtering operations commenced before the close of last season. Further additional cold-storage accommodation was provided by several of the companies.

INSPECTION OF MEAT.

The inspection of meat at meat-export slaughterhouses, abattoirs, and bacon-factories was again carried out with extreme difficulty, owing to war conditions causing fully trained Inspectors available to be insufficient for requirements, and had not these Inspectors met the position and willingly rendered increased service—sometimes at great inconvenience—the Department could not have had these duties carried out so satisfactorily and efficiently as they have been.

The following are the numbers of each class of stock slaughtered under direct inspection during the year 1st April, 1918, to 31st March, 1919 : Cattle, 307,816 ; calves, 18,872 ; sheep, 4,170,524 ; lambs, 2,928,892 ; swine, 121,040. With the exception of swine, which show a decrease of 16,199, these figures show an increase when compared with the corresponding period of last year as follows : Cattle, 17,666 ; calves, 4,392 ; sheep, 752,942 ; lambs, 253,746. It will be noted from this that an increase of over a million has taken place in the combined slaughtering of sheep and lambs.

The following table indicates the destination of the dressed carcasses, those animals slaughtered at abattoirs being almost wholly for local consumption, and those slaughtered at meat-export slaughterhouses being (except in the case of swine) intended principally for export :—

	At Abattoirs.	At Meat-export Slaughterhouses.	At Bacon-factories.
Cattle	88,945	218,871	..
Calves	14,547	4,325	..
Sheep	480,372	3,690,152	..
Lambs	83,479	2,845,413	..
Swine	44,879	56,625	19,536

At ordinary slaughterhouses the stock killed was as follows : Cattle, 47,541 ; calves, 1,426 ; sheep, 210,481 ; lambs, 21,424 ; swine, 11,405.

In addition, 23,515 carcasses of pigs killed and dressed by farmers under the exemption clause of the Slaughtering and Inspection Act, and sent in to butchers' shops and small bacon-factories, were inspected by departmental officers.