

Condemnations by Stock Inspectors on the farms or in the sale-yards are also slightly lower. Active measures have been taken to deal with ticks infesting cattle, and extended regulations are under consideration—the fortunate entire absence of tick-fever in the Dominion not being allowed to deter activity in these precautionary measures. Dips and dipping are increasing steadily in the districts affected. Contagious abortion in cattle is still the cause of considerable trouble and loss to dairy-farmers, and new methods are being adopted in dealing with it. With the continued steady and substantial increases in cattle, due to the expansion of the dairy industry, maintenance of health in the herds throws an added responsibility on the Department, and the importance of maintaining a strong experienced staff in the Live-stock Division should need little stressing.

The meat-inspection service was well maintained throughout the year, the men who had been engaged to take the place of Inspectors who had joined the Forces during the war having become experienced and well trained. Owing to the difficulties with which the commercial side of the industry had to cope as a result of unavoidable congestion of stores and delayed shipment, much attention had to be given to the condition of meat held too long in store. In this matter our departmental officers worked in conjunction with the Department of Imperial Government Supplies, and met the position in the best way possible under the circumstances. It is specially satisfactory to note that, in spite of extra work thrown upon the inspection staff, efficiency in the matter of preventing any diseased meat going into the stores for export was fully maintained, there being an entire absence of any complaints on the point from the marketing end. The inspection in public abattoirs of meat for local consumption was maintained on the same high level of efficiency as heretofore.

The Poultry Instructors attached to the Live-stock Division had an extra-busy year, this being largely due to renewed development of the poultry industry after the set-back of war conditions. The Department is handicapped in its poultry service and investigation work owing to the out-of-date nature of the equipment at the Milton Poultry-station, while a large portion of the Ruakura plant is also of this description. As soon as financial considerations permit, radical renewals will have to be undertaken at both places.

The rabbit nuisance is still in evidence, although much successful control work has been accomplished. A feature of the year's work generally was the big and largely increased demand for rabbit-poison from the Department's depots, this being so great as to cause the supply to run short in some cases. It is very satisfactory to record an increase in the number of local Rabbit Boards. Amending legislation dealing with this matter and extending the facilities for the formation of Boards was enacted in the session of 1920.

As regards noxious-weeds control—one of the present functions of the Live-stock Division—some good work has been carried out. An amending Bill to the Noxious Weeds Act, designed for the better working of that measure, is under consideration.

The Dairy Division had the task of handling a record output of dairy-produce and of meeting expanding activities at all points. In this it acquitted itself well. During the year the grading system was amended by the institution of a small charge for grading butter and cheese on a per-package basis. The service of free grading had been introduced in the early days of the industry when the latter was still in a struggling condition. With the growing prosperity of the industry, together with the necessity for securing revenue for other allied purposes, it was obvious that the time had arrived when the grading system should be made self-supporting. There has been a satisfactory development in farm-dairy instruction, the special purpose of which is to get down to the working base of the industry in the milking-sheds and intermediary stages of the raw material between farm and factory. At the close of the year nineteen such Instructors, appointed and paid in co-operation with dairy companies, were at work, but more are called for to cover the field. The necessity for the utmost care in the cleanliness of milking-machines would in itself justify this service of inspection and practical advice. As regards the ordinary service of instruction in dairy factories, improved quality of both butter and cheese submitted for grading afforded practical evidence of its maintained usefulness. The application of the advice tendered to the factories for some years past in connection with the pasteurization of milk for cheesemaking and the subsequent cool-curing of the cheese has also proved valuable. A factor in improved quality of butter has been the steadily increasing adoption of the system of cream-grading as consistently advocated by the Division. The tendency of some factories to run too close to the legal limit of the moisture content of butter has resulted in the discovery of instances of excess moisture, and legal proceedings may be necessary if the practice in question is not ameliorated.

The popularity of the certificate-of-record system of testing purebred dairy cows, controlled by the Dairy Division, was demonstrated by further increases in entries on the part of breeders and others, necessitating an increase in the testing staff, and charges have had to be raised to meet part of the increased cost of operation. The association system of herd-testing, for the greater part promoted and recorded by the Division, has also shown a marked expansion. Both these activities have accounted for a good deal of additional clerical work at headquarters.

The Horticulture Division has experienced a very busy year in connection with its various functions. The Division takes an intimate leading part in relation to the fruitgrowing industry, which at the close of the year was operating some 30,000 acres of commercial orchards. The services of the Orchard Instructors are in great demand, and the amount of advisory and inspectional work carried out by them makes a very large aggregate. The very substantial development of the industry in Nelson necessitated the formation of an additional instructorate in that district. After a break of several years, due to war conditions, the export of fruit (mainly apples) to the British market was renewed successfully. The Division took an active part in this matter as administering the new fruit-export regulations, which are mainly designed to ensure proper standardization and high quality