

seriously felt in the districts chiefly affected—Otago and South Canterbury—and also in the remainder of Canterbury, although perhaps not to the same extent, but, nevertheless, seriously enough to cause concern should the winter be a severe one. In spite of the exceptions mentioned, stock on the whole have done well, and a very considerable increase took place in the numbers slaughtered for export.

#### STOCK-DISEASES.

It is satisfactory to report that the Dominion remains free from the most serious diseases. True, some further deaths from anthrax on the farm where the deaths were reported last year were recorded, but no further deaths have taken place since June last (1923). To ensure a greater measure of safety the regulations pertaining to the introducing of stock, &c., have been strengthened, and where necessary total prohibition of stock and fodder has been imposed.

The matter of the possibility of the introduction of disease—foot-and-mouth disease in particular—through the medium of packing-material such as straw, hay, and chaff has not been overlooked, and regulations requiring a certificate of sterilization if from the United Kingdom, or its total destruction by burning if from that or any other affected country, came into force shortly before the close of the year under review.

With respect to a number of what we have heretofore called minor diseases or troubles, but which have rapidly assumed too large proportions to be longer so designated, I am afraid that we have been experiencing some of the effects of years of neglect in the proper rearing of the young stock retained to take the place of their sires and dams in the future production of the Dominion. The manner in which a very considerable number of the calves are reared leaves much to be desired, and if production is to continue to expand as it should more attention must be paid to the rearing of the young stock so as to retain the constitution and resistance-powers so necessary to animals which under present-day conditions must produce the maximum. There is no gainsaying the fact that weakened constitutional powers render animals more prone to infection from such diseases as contagious mammitis, tuberculosis, &c.

*Blackleg.*—The inoculation of calves for the prevention of blackleg in the districts affected and defined in the regulations was carried out during the year, and a total of 45,440 calves were vaccinated in the Taranaki District area. This is a slight decrease on the figures for the previous year. The need for the vaccination of calves is still apparent, but it is satisfactory to report that the disease does not show any increase, nor has it extended to other districts. A continuance of the restrictions on the movement of calves out of the quarantine area is necessary in order to safeguard clean districts.

*Contagious Mammitis.*—While this disease gave a considerable amount of trouble and was no doubt the cause of great financial loss, it did not appear to be quite as prevalent as during the two previous seasons, this being particularly marked in the Canterbury-West Coast and the Otago-Southland Districts, and an improvement was also noticeable in the Wellington District. Observations have again shown the disease to be more troublesome where milking-machines are in use, and, as I have before stated, want of ordinary care in regard to cleanliness and sterilization of machine-cups, &c., and want of constant care in the daily hand examination of the udders, are a very important factor in the spread of this disease throughout the herd. During the year 794 samples of milk were received at the Veterinary Laboratory, Wallaceville, from cases of suspected mammitis. Of these 343, or 43 per cent., were found on examination to be from cases of contagious mammitis, 226 were of the non-contagious type, and the remaining 225 were normal.

*Contagious Abortion and Sterility.*—A further diminution in regard to contagious abortion would appear to have taken place, but the question of sterility still remains a serious one for the dairy-farmer, and also for the officers of the Department to control. In his annual report to me the District Superintendent, Auckland, makes the following interesting observation under this heading in referring to an apparent decrease in cases noticed: "However, if the actual numbers of aborting cases would appear to have been less, the problem of sterility, or delayed conception, appears more acute. From this one is inclined to wonder if we are arriving at a stage where through immunity the actual abortions are becoming less whereas the phase of sterility is becoming more active." The treatment recommended by the Department is reported to be giving good results when carefully and sensibly applied. To assist in the diagnosis of this disease use is being made of the method of examination of blood specimens, and during the year 241 blood samples were examined at the Veterinary Laboratory. Of these 122 gave positive reactions.

*Vaginitis.*—A considerable amount of trouble has again been experienced throughout the dairy herds from vaginitis in its various forms, often accompanied by sterility, and this has undoubtedly been the cause of more concern to owners than any other trouble they have had to contend with. Fortunately, although indications point otherwise, a number of the cows affected continue to hold and come into profit at the usual time, but others do not, and the loss is severe. The treatment advised by the departmental officers has been found to give satisfactory results, but, owing to failure in many cases to detect it in its early stages, the treatment has to be continued over a much longer period, and it is sometimes difficult to get farmers to conscientiously carry it out over the period necessary.

*Tuberculosis.*—The statistics taken out regarding this disease in regard to cattle and swine examined on slaughter at freezing-works and abattoirs indicate that a slight reduction has taken place in the percentage of affected animals when compared with the figures for the previous year. This reduction is certainly slight, but a tendency downwards, however small, is an encouraging sign, as the two previous years had shown some increase. In respect to the condemnation of cattle by Stock Inspectors in the field for tubercular infection, on clinical examination, and as a result of the tuberculin test, while the aggregate figures show a decrease of 115 animals, an examination reveals an increase in condemnations in the Auckland District of 296, and a smaller increase in Otago-Southland District