

In regard to a clean milk-supply the human element counts for a great deal, as, given the most up-to-date premises imaginable, if cleanliness is not maintained a first-grade milk cannot be produced.

Milking-machines have of late come into extensive use in dairies supplying milk for human consumption, and failure to regularly clean these machines after use is a source of considerable trouble. This is a matter which should be remedied. The regulations under which inspection of local milk-supplies is carried out are not sufficient to meet the position in regard to this, and consideration is being given to an addition to them.

The number of dairies registered during the year for the supply of milk for direct consumption was 4,194.

#### IMPORTATION OF ANIMAL-MANURES.

The importation from Australia and India of animal-manures sterilized under supervision did not for various reasons come up to expectations. Considerable difficulty is still experienced in obtaining freight to New Zealand for even small consignments, and in addition the seamen's and railway strike in Australia hampered, and at times entirely suspended, business in this direction with New Zealand.

The organization in regard to the supervision of the sterilization of animal-manures from India and Australia has been maintained, but it is a matter for consideration whether, in view of the limited imports to New Zealand of animal-manures, we should not now withdraw our organization from one at least of these countries and so confine the source of supply to one place.

#### POULTRY INDUSTRY.

The poultry industry, owing largely to the high cost of foodstuffs which ruled, has not shown the progress looked for. Although a number of the more recently established plants ceased activities, some of the older plants concentrated on the production of a greater number of pullets, and it is anticipated that during the coming season the export of eggs should show a considerable advance on previous years. This is an industry admirably suited to the farm as a side line, and could be made to add considerably to the yearly income if intelligently managed.

The following is the report of the Chief Poultry Instructor:—

With the shortage of wheat-supplies and the consequent high prices charged for it the poultry industry during the past year has received a severe check. The higher cost of production has had a marked effect on plants where the modern type of bird was not kept, and where modern methods of management were not adopted. Although food-prices have been high, the prices of eggs have also ruled at a high level. Thus on plants where only highly selected stock have been kept, and where these have been properly fed and managed, the owners report a profitable year. Indeed, some of the noted poultrymen of long standing declare it to have been one of their best years.

A gratifying feature at the present time in connection with the industry is the increasing number of large plants established throughout the country, and which are proving profitable undertakings to their owners. A few years ago large commercial plants were few and far between. Now there are many, ranging from 600 to 1,000 bird-capacity, while in some cases plants are carrying upwards of 3,000 laying-birds. The advance made in this connection is almost entirely due to the improved type of laying-bird now available, and the advanced knowledge relative to the breeding, housing, feeding, and general management of poultry.

While there is ample room for the extension of large commercial plants, the industry holds out the greatest promise to the side-line poultry-keeper, especially to the small settler on the land. At the present time there are few farms in the Dominion where poultry are not kept on a moderate scale, but, unfortunately, in the majority of cases improvement is required both in regard to the quality of the stock and their management. It is a matter for regret that more farmers do not avail themselves of the free practical advice and assistance which is available to them by medium of the Poultry Instructors, and printed matter issued by the Department at a minimum of cost.

There is little need to fear that egg-production in particular can be overdone in the Dominion. There is always a keen demand for fresh eggs on the local market, while any surplus can normally be exported at payable prices to the producer. Unfortunately, owing to the shipping strike that took place last spring no eggs could be exported in the year under review. Many cases which were packed and ready to be shipped had to be diverted to the local market. It is satisfactory to note that there is ample egg-pulp in the freezing-chambers for use of large consumers in the scarce season of supply. This is evidenced by the fact that on 31st March last there were over 100 tons more pulp in store than on the corresponding day last year. In view of this it is safe to assume that there will be an excess of pulp beyond requirements for winter use. In all probability it will represent eggs in shell totalling 5,000 cases of 30 dozen each which could have been exported last season had shipping been in a normal state.

At the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition comprehensive exhibits relative to all branches connected with poultry-keeping were made. The object aimed at was to demonstrate to poultry-keepers, particularly the women-folk on the ordinary farm, modern methods of poultry-management. This was achieved to a high degree, as during the term of the Exhibition thousands of interested persons took advantage of the outstanding educational facilities which were made available to them.

The decision to establish an experimental and breeding station in the Hutt Valley, near Wellington, will undoubtedly prove of great value in widening the knowledge of the Poultry Instructors, which in turn will be passed on for the benefit of producers and the industry generally.

During the year the instructional staff have been kept busy, chiefly in assisting producers through the medium of lectures, demonstrations, and visiting plants both large and small, and giving practical advice and assistance on the spot.

#### VETERINARY LABORATORY.

The work at the Veterinary Laboratory at Wallaceville has been carried out during the year with increased activity, and a considerable amount of useful and valuable work has been recorded, particularly in connection with such troubles as contagious mammitis, contagious abortion, and sterility in dairy cows. These diseases present difficulties which have baffled investigators not only in New Zealand but throughout the world, and if a solution is to be found for them it can only be by continued and determined efforts.

The following constitutes a summary of the year's operation by the Officer in Charge, Mr. C. S. M. Hopkirk, B.V. Sc. (Melbourne):—

During the year under review 3,513 specimens were examined, the number for the previous year being 2,649. The increase has been an all-round one, and has been due, I believe, to an increased feeling of confidence in the efforts of the Laboratory staff, rather than to an increase in disease. As more specimens have been forwarded, just so has the educational value of the Laboratory been advanced.