

LIVE-STOCK DIVISION.

REPORT OF J. LYONS, M.R.C.V.S., DIRECTOR.

STOCK CONDITIONS GENERALLY.

The winter of 1929 was a mild one, with rainfall above the average in many parts, and this excess of moisture was maintained right up into the new year. The abundant rainfall, while being advantageous for bringing dairy stock up to their productive period in good condition and in maintaining that condition right through the season, had the opposite effect on sheep. Owing to the rank slushy feed produced through excessive rainfall and mild conditions, large numbers of hoggets, particularly in the southern and middle portion of the North Island, went off in condition during autumn and early winter of last year and became a prey to internal parasites. Consequently heavy mortality has to be recorded in many flocks in these areas.

In many districts, too, the meteorological conditions prevailing were unsatisfactory for haymaking, consequently the quantity saved is below the average, both as regards quantity and quality. As against this, however, a large quantity of ensilage was saved, so that in the dairying districts, given normal seasonable weather, one can look forward to the stock coming through the coming winter in good condition.

HEALTH OF STOCK.

The principal diseases and troubles affecting stock are dealt with under the respective headings as follows:—

HORSES.

The health and condition of horses has been good in all parts of the country, although there were a few cases of strangles, influenza, and colds, which recovered under treatment. There have been no untoward circumstances amongst equines that require special mention.

Prices for horses have been good—in fact, quite up to the average of recent seasons; nevertheless, the breeding of all classes of horses, with the exception of thoroughbreds, seems to be in abeyance and more or less neglected. There are still a few enthusiasts amongst Clydesdale breeders who take an interest in this class of stock. It is doubtful, however, whether enough are being bred to meet even the present demands, and if the present indifference continues it is a question whether sufficient will be reared to meet the demand for farm-work. On account of the limited number of mares being put to breeding purposes, the keeping of an entire horse has become an unprofitable proposition in many districts. Thus, because of no satisfactory sire being available, many farmers who would otherwise rear a foal or two each season are debarred from doing so. Should this condition extend it will mean that there will not be enough horses reared to meet the demand for farming purposes and, as a certain number will still be required, those available may reach prohibitive prices.

CATTLE.

Tuberculosis.—The total number of cattle slaughtered in the field as the result of clinical examination and the tuberculin test amounted to 5,137, an increase of 514 over last year. Increases have to be recorded in the following districts: Auckland, 238; Wellington, 154; Dunedin, 134. Christchurch showed a decrease of 12. This increase over last year must not be regarded as indicating an increase in the incidence of tubercular disease in our herds, but rather as an indication of increased activity among inspecting officers. As will be noted later, the over-all percentage of animals found affected with tuberculosis when inspected on slaughter shows some decrease.

The number of cattle inspected at the various abattoirs and meat-export slaughterhouses was 284,517, a decrease of 36,428 from last year. Of these, 14,539, or 5.11 per cent., a decrease of 0.11 per cent. from last year, were found affected with tuberculosis in varying degrees, a large percentage of those affected being found to be only slightly so. The total number of swine examined was 497,454, an increase of 6,665 from last year. Of these, 48,484, or 9.74 per cent., were found affected on examination, a decrease of 0.40 per cent. from last year.

Actinomycolosis.—The animals condemned for this disease and for which compensation was paid show an increase over last year's figures. The number condemned was 718, as against 685 last year. The district totals were as follows: Canterbury, 53; Dunedin, 70; Wellington, 211; Auckland, 381. Only those cases showing open lesions were condemned and destroyed, because from previous experience treatment in such cases has proved ineffective. It is to be regretted that owners of stock affected with this disease do not seek advice and apply curative treatment in the earlier stages, and thus save the lives of many valuable animals.

Mammitis.—Generally speaking, the position with regard to this disease remains much the same as in former years. The number culled for this complaint alone is far too high, and in the aggregate the loss to the country amounts to thousands of pounds annually. I feel confident in stating, however, that the number culled could be considerably reduced were more care used in the milking and management of our herds. The dairy-farmers in this country—and, I may state, in every other country where dairying is extensively carried on—are looking for a remedy which will control the incidence of this disease. So far, however, scientific investigation has failed in this respect. To