

LIVE-STOCK DIVISION.

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

GENERAL CONDITIONS.

Speaking generally, the season just past has been one of the best which we have seen for many years. The winter, which was an exceedingly mild one, was followed by spring and summer conditions which were ideal for pastures and all classes of crops. Under these conditions all classes of stock did well and a record season was experienced.

The exceptions to this are the Wairarapa, Canterbury, and North Otago districts. In the Wairarapa drought conditions were in evidence from the previous summer and feed for dairy cows had to be brought from other districts. In parts of Canterbury and North Otago, although spring and early summer conditions were favourable for the production of cereals, the latter part of the season was too dry for the production of root crops, and these in many parts of the district are more or less a failure, and the settlers are faced with a shortage of winter feed. Taking into consideration the condition of the pastures, the amount of hay and ensilage saved, and the ordinary winter conditions prevailing, we can look forward to all classes of stock wintering satisfactorily.

HEALTH OF LIVE-STOCK.

HORSES.

In my last report of last year I remarked that it was regrettable that more heavy horses of the right type were not being bred. This remark has been justified, as the demand for this type of horse is more in evidence at the present time than has been the case for years. In addition to this, the demand is increasing in Australia, and horses of both sexes are being exported there in increasing numbers and at satisfactory prices. This is a branch of farming which could be made remunerative to those who have the time and means to devote to it.

The health of this class of stock has been good, and with the exception of a few cases of strangles in young horses there has been no disease worthy of mention.

CATTLE.

Tuberculosis.—The total number of cattle condemned in the field as a result of clinical examination and the tuberculin test amounted to 4,270. The total number of cattle examined at the various abattoirs and meat-export slaughterhouses was 337,301, an increase of 70,453 over last year's figures. Of these, 17,277, or 5.1 per cent., were found affected in varying degrees, a large percentage being only slightly affected.

Actinomycosis.—The number of animals condemned and for which compensation was paid was 535, a decrease of 104 over last year's figures. The number condemned represents advanced cases of the disease, mostly affecting bony tissues and not amenable to treatment. In addition to these a large number of cases were subjected to treatment with satisfactory results. In those cases where the soft tissues only are implicated the disease is more amenable to treatment than where hard or bony tissues are concerned. Treatment to be satisfactory should be undertaken in the early stages of the disease.

Malignant Growths.—The number of animals condemned and for which compensation was paid was 281, a decrease of 150 over last year's figures.

Johne's Disease.—In recent years a number of cases of this disease have been discovered in the Taranaki district. Eleven head of dairy cows and two bulls were condemned and destroyed during the year. In all cases confirmation of the disease was made at the Veterinary Laboratory, Wallaceville. Inspectors have been instructed to be on the watch for this disease, and although a few farms are concerned there is no fear of the disease assuming epidemic propensities.

Blackleg.—The incidence of this disease can again be considered satisfactory both as regards the number of outbreaks and the number of deaths recorded, which were considerably less than those of last year. It is to be regretted that a few cases took place in the Kaitaia district, where it has not previously been seen. A vigilant watch is being kept in all districts, and by inoculation carried out early in the season it is hoped the incidence of the disease will be reduced to a minimum. The new formalinized vaccine is giving every satisfaction.

Cattle Tick.—The position regarding this pest can be considered satisfactory. In some districts an increase has to be reported, whereas in other districts a corresponding decrease is seen. With regard to the control of ticks, the District Superintendent, Auckland, remarks: "There is increasing evidence to show that on farms that are properly grazed and top-dressed ticks soon decrease in numbers." In my previous reports I have pointed out the necessity for destroying all cover in which the ticks hibernate during the winter months. On well-grazed dairy-farms this presents little difficulty. On the rougher grazing-runs, however, this is a different matter and requires constant attention if the pest is to be kept in control. Owners of such properties should see that, if possible, all covering where the ticks winter should be destroyed by fire. In the B area a careful watch is being kept on any fresh outbreak that may occur, and every precaution is taken to cope with the invasion. On a number of properties the tick has apparently been stamped out through the action taken.