

Ragwort Poisoning.—This complaint still exacts a toll from stock in ragwort-infested districts. With the exception of sheep, stock will not deliberately eat this weed, and the fact that a considerable number of deaths has occurred in both horses and cattle goes to show that the weed in such pastures is so plentiful that stock cannot avoid eating it with the grass. It is to be regretted that pastures are allowed to become contaminated to this extent, and landowners should see that the pastures are treated. Now that an excellent means of destroying ragwort has been discovered, combined with the use of otherwise unemployed labour, there is no excuse for such a state of affairs, and it is imperative that those farmers whose lands are infested with the weed take advantage of the facilities available for effectively dealing with it.

SHEEP.

A successful year has been experienced with regard to this class of stock. The wool-clip has been up to the average and the lambing percentage has been good. Lambs arrived at the meat-works in excellent condition, a large percentage being killed directly from the mother. Disease has been less in evidence than for many years past. Unfortunately, however, prices for all classes have been low. The price paid for wool has also been low, though showing signs of improvement.

Lymphadenitis.—In my last report it was stated that when evidence of the disease is seen at the meat-works the sheep are traced to the holdings from which they came and advice given with reference to the control of the disease. In spite of this there does not appear to be any marked decrease in the number of cases found on slaughter. Sheep-farmers for the most part are too apathetic in this matter, and would apparently rather put up with the few losses incurred than go to the trouble of segregating their flocks and getting rid of the affected animals. The incidence of this disease can be controlled as shown by the work carried out on a station in Central Otago by the District Superintendent, Dunedin, the results of which show that the disease can be definitely controlled. In 1931 the whole of the ewes on this property were examined and the affected sheep segregated with the ultimate object of getting rid of affected animals. In that year 11,196 were examined, when 1,046 (9.34 per cent.) were found affected; in 1932 10,129 were examined, and 377 (3.72 per cent.) were found affected; in 1933 11,319 were examined, and 209 (1.85 per cent.) were found affected. As a direct result of this work other flockowners are asking that their flocks be examined. The extension of this practice will go a long way in removing the incidence of the disease in affected flocks. This disease is contracted chiefly through wounds made at shearing and docking, and it behoves every flockowner to see that the instruments used in these operations are thoroughly disinfected and the yards and surroundings kept in a sanitary condition.

Renal Congestion in Lambs.—The loss of lambs from this trouble, with the exception of the Clyde inspectorate, was below that experienced in recent years. Mr. Gill, of the Veterinary Laboratory, again spent some time in the district during the season making investigation into the disease, and the result of this investigation was incorporated in an article written by him in the *Journal of Agriculture* for December, 1932. As a preventive measure a number of lambs were treated with a vaccine and a further number inoculated with antitoxin, with the result that vaccination was found to be of little or no value, whereas antitoxin was definitely effective. While the result of the antitoxin was effective, it is doubtful, except in cases where mortality is high, if inoculation will be used by the flockowners to any great extent. It is felt that for the saving of about 3 per cent. it would not compensate for the disturbance amongst the remainder of the flock. Preventive inoculation, however, will be of decided economic value on those farms where the mortality is known to be high.

Parasitic Diseases.—This trouble has not been in evidence to such an extent as in the previous season. A few isolated outbreaks were seen, but in no instance was the mortality high. Sheep-farmers generally are beginning to pay more attention to their flocks by providing more suitable food and by drenching earlier in the season before the effects of the parasites begin to take effect. This is a step in the right direction. The difficulty with this trouble is to satisfactorily check it when once it has become established on a farm.

Ante-partum Paralysis in Ewes.—Very little of this trouble was seen throughout the season. A few isolated cases were noticed and advice given by officers of the Division.

Lice and Ticks.—It was found during the season that these pests were more in evidence than in previous seasons, and it was necessary to enforce the penal provision of the Act against offenders, with the result that owners are taking precautions to see that their sheep are clean before being placed in the yards for sale.

Maggot-fly.—As a whole, this pest has been less in evidence than in previous seasons. One or two districts in northern areas suffered severely. So far the natural enemy liberated has not succeeded in keeping the fly in check, and for the present flockowners will have to resort to preventive methods such as trapping, also to burying all dead carcasses and other material that afford the pest a breeding place.

General.—A number of minor ailments were seen which were attended to and advice given by the various field officers of the Division.

PIGS.

The number of pigs slaughtered for the season was 508,623, an increase of 48,833. The quantity of pork exported was 186,652 cwt., as compared with 104,882 cwt. for the previous season, an increase of 81,770 cwt.

The type and quality of pig carcasses are improving, and there is a general desire on the part of the dairy-farmer to better his feeding methods and to improve his stock. The prices paid for pigs, although not showing a sufficient margin of profit, were higher on the whole than during the previous season. This class of farming showed a better return for the labour expended than almost any other. Farmers are beginning to realize this and are paying more attention to pig-raising, and as regards housing, feeding, and the improvement of the breed.