

*Farm Poultry.*—It has been the policy of the Department to advocate farm poultry-keeping, as it is felt that the production of eggs and poultry-meats can be made a profitable side-line to farmers, especially dairy-farmers. It is true that some poultry are kept on practically every general farm, but few farmers are really interested in poultry. However, quite a few could augment their income if they realized that a flock of well-bred birds can be made to pay well if some suitable person—a son or a daughter—could be encouraged to study and practice efficient methods of management and give the birds a reasonable amount of regular attention.

“A curd-feeding test for egg-production being conducted at the Animal Research Station, Ruakura, is demonstrating the advantages of the proper utilization of dairy-farm by-products.

*Egg-laying Tests.*—During the year egg-laying tests were conducted at Auckland, Taranaki, Massey Agricultural College, and Papanui. These tests were well supported, and altogether 983 pullets and 118 ducks were individually tested. Many very good birds were sent forward, and good laying was recorded.

“For some time past it has been realized that the conditions governing these tests should be such that only birds of certain quality should be allowed to compete, and more credit given to the breeding-value of the birds and the quality of eggs produced. In this connection it is pleasing to report that recently, at the request of the Department, those concerned in the conduct of egg-laying tests, the New Zealand Poultry Board, and a representative from the Department met in conference, and a set of uniform conditions to govern all tests was agreed upon.

“As long as egg-laying tests are governed by the conditions which were agreed upon, they will prove of great assistance to the industry and justify every support.

*Egg-export.*—During the past season 7,759 cases of eggs—232,770 dozen—were shipped to the United Kingdom, as compared with 2,338 cases—70,140 dozen—shipped the previous season. An increase of 162,630 dozen is shown over the previous season's export. A guarantee of 1s. 2½d. per dozen was given by the Government on all first-grade eggs passed for export during the 1938 season.

“Last season a standard type of case and similar packing-material were used at all the exporting centres, and it is pleasing to report that all the shipments arrived in London in good condition.

*Chilled Eggs (Marketing) Regulations.*—During the year the above regulations were amended in order to provide for the stamping of all eggs placed in cool store. Visits of inspection to the various cool stores showed that, generally speaking, the regulations were fully complied with. However, in one instance some eggs were found to be unstamped, and in some cases the stamping was not well done. These omissions were attended to, and those concerned advised to exercise more care in future.

*Chick-sexing Examinations.*—Three chick-sexing examinations were conducted by the Department during the past year. Six candidates undertook the examination, three sitting for first-class certificates and three for second-class certificates. Two qualified for a first-class certificate, one for a second-class certificate, and one for the renewal of his second-class certificate.

“At the present time there are five chick-sexers holding New Zealand certificates—three holding first-class and two holding second-class certificates.

*Health of Stock.*—Reports from the district Poultry Instructors show that increased requests for their services have been due to ailments or disease amongst flocks.

“The South Island Poultry Instructor reports that coccidia troubles are on the increase in the South Island, and owing to the absence of concrete floors on many older-established plants this trouble is difficult to eradicate. He advises that the use of flame throwers, whereby floors and equipment are subject to intense heat, has been beneficial.

“It may be mentioned that a few years ago some heavy losses were experienced from coccidiosis, especially in the Wellington, Foxton, and Manawatu districts, but by a good clean-up on these plants, heavy culling of stock, the introduction of fresh blood, and extra care in the selection of breeding-stock these plants were practically freed of the trouble, and it is felt that if those poultry-keepers who are now experiencing trouble will only adopt similar methods and practise a regular system of sanitation they will soon rid their plants of this trouble.

“Since the introduction of the large mammoth incubators there has been a tendency on some plants to aim for quantity rather than quality.

“Investigations have indicated that many outbreaks of coccidiosis have been mainly due to weakened breeding-stock, and for this reason poultry-keepers cannot be too careful in the selection of their breeding-birds.

*Pullorum Disease.*—As the result of post-mortem examination of chicks forwarded to the Animal Research Station, Wallaceville, revealing pullorum disease the Department decided to blood-test a certain number of flocks where infection had been indicated.

“The result of the testing of these flocks revealed a larger percentage of reactors than was anticipated. However, it is interesting to note that the mortality rate in chicks on these plants has not been unduly heavy; in fact, in almost every case where losses have been experienced, investigation has shown that the chickens have been exposed to some weakening condition regarding management.

“Apart from some rather severe losses from coccidiosis, occasional colds, and odd cases of leukæmia and tuberculosis, there has not been any serious outbreak of disease. Nevertheless, the position is such that poultry-keepers cannot be too careful in regard to cleanliness, culling of flocks, and selection of breeding-birds, especially those keeping stock on the intensive system and on old plants.

*Sale of Unfit Stock.*—Wherever possible, Poultry Instructors have visited auction-marts and inspected birds offered for sale. Through the activities of the Department and the co-operation of