

VETERINARY LABORATORY, WALLACEVILLE.

REPORT OF C. S. M. HOPKIRK, D.V.Sc., OFFICER IN CHARGE.

During the year the Laboratory has been extremely busy and taxed to the limit of its resources in the effort made by the Department of Agriculture to co-operate all services of the country in the study of the disease facial eczema. This work was placed in the very capable hands of Dr. J. F. Filmer, and all sections of the Laboratory have given the maximum assistance. The fact that a definite and important line of work became necessary showed the weak points in the staffing, and efforts have since been made to strengthen them.

Subsequently, three definite sections have been formed, the first diagnostic, the second nutritional, and the third a section combining pathology, specific disease, parasitology, &c., and in which work of an investigational nature will be carried out.

STAFF.

The Officer in Charge spent nine months of the year abroad attending conferences in London, Switzerland, and Holland and visiting laboratories in South Africa, Great Britain, the Continent, and America. The time was well spent, for contacts so made will prove invaluable. During his absence the control of the Laboratory was placed in the hands of Mr. L. W. N. Fitch who ably piloted the Laboratory through a difficult season.

At the end of the year Dr. J. F. Filmer was appointed Director of the new Animal Research Division in which this Laboratory now functions.

Dr. I. J. Cunningham returned from Sydney with the degree of B.V.Sc., so qualifying him for leadership of the Nutrition Section of this station. Dr. Marion M. Cunningham then relinquished her temporary appointment.

Dr. W. G. Fischel joined the staff and is working on poultry diseases.

Mr. J. P. James, M.R.C.V.S., B.Sc., who had recently qualified in London, was placed on mastitis work and has been giving considerable attention to the brom-thymol-blue project of the herd-testing association.

Mr. A. L. Thompson, M.R.C.V.S., rejoined the Department and has undertaken sterility work in the Waikato area, also giving attention to the bull experiment at Ruakura.

Mr. N. T. Clare, M.Sc., and Miss A. S. Donne, M.Sc., have been added to the Nutrition Section.

BUILDING.

The new Laboratory building is beginning to dominate the old Laboratory, but it will not be finished during 1939.

A Poultry Overseer's house is also in course of construction.

CATTLE DISEASES.

Diagnosis.—Three hundred and fifteen specimens were received for examination, representative of the full list of cattle diseases of the country. There were none, however, requiring particular comment except that one case of tuberculosis was found in eighty-two composite milk-samples taken from carts where milk was exposed for sale.

Mastitis of Dairy Cows.—Diagnostic examination of milk-samples has been carried on as usual at Hamilton and at Wallaceville. The numbers of samples received at Wallaceville have dropped off considerably, only 1,735 being examined for the mammitis-control scheme. Groupings were as follow: A group, 576; B group, 742; C group, 417. In addition, there were 355 samples received for examination from farmers, 194 of these being actual cases of the disease.

At Hamilton, for the mammitis-control scheme, groupings were as follow: A group, 13,949; B group, 7,577; C group, 4,991—a total of 26,517 samples. In addition, 7,485 miscellaneous samples were received, 3,323 being from definite quarters of suspected cows. Check-testing, comparing brom thymol blue with the leucocyte assessment, was carried out on 11,439 samples.

Mr. Kidd, in his report, has given a table showing the percentage of cows grouped in each examination during the season over a period of years:—

	A.	B.	C.
1931-32	66	15	15
1932-33	62	15	19
1933-34	67	20	10
1934-35	72	17	5
1935-36	69	22	7
1936-37	62	26	8
1937-38	61	28	10
1938-39	53	29	16

It will be noted that in 1934-35 the percentage of C group had reduced considerably, but that the B and C groups increased up to the 1938-39 season. The table is one of interest, but so many factors come into play that the table gives no true indication of the benefits or otherwise accruing from the mammitis-control scheme. The increase may be due to the fact that several satisfied farmers dropped out and no new herds were accepted for test. A further explanation exists in that many farmers are retaining the C group cows, a provision which has always been considered desirable for practical purposes.