

scribed medicinally in order to check hæmorrhage after calving, to promote contraction of the womb, and to hasten the expulsion of the afterbirth. The same authority writes that ergot given experimentally, in large or continued doses, causes ergotism, a condition characterized by derangement of the stomach and bowels, nausea, and diarrhœa. Its effect upon the circulation causes dry gangrene, chiefly involving the extremities, ears, and tail, and may also produce inco-ordinate spasms, and sometimes epileptiform convulsions. Under "Toxic Effects," Dun mentions that these are not so marked in horses, cattle, sheep, and rabbits, as in men and dogs.

The following experiment is quoted in illustration of the above: "Thirty cows amongst them took daily with impunity 37 lb. for three months; two milk-cows had between them 9 lb. daily, with no further evil effect than that the butter was badly tasted. Twenty sheep amongst them ate daily for four weeks 9 lb. without injury. Dogs, on the contrary, suffered violent illness after receiving 6-12 drams, while 3 oz. proved fatal to a terrier bitch in twenty hours. Chronic poisoning occurs, especially in patients placed in unfavourable sanitary surroundings. . . . Gangrene of the extremities is not, however, produced so readily as in man."

Gilruth in 1905 carried out feeding-experiments on cattle and sheep, using a commercial sample of the dried ergot sclerotia for this purpose. The ergot was fed to the experimental animals mixed with damp chaff. In forty-five days a calf consumed 10½ lb. of ergot, and in the same period a sheep ate 1½ lb., while another sheep took ¾ lb. of the ergot-spurs. No ill effects followed.

Although insufficient in extent to be conclusive, the result of this present experiment goes to indicate that the effects of ingestion of ergot by cattle are not as appreciable as popularly supposed. It serves also in the same measure to support the conclusions arrived at concerning the cause of gangrene of the feet, a condition shown to be associated with the presence of a specific organism. (See Annual Report, Department of Agriculture, 1910.)

In connection with these experiments it is worthy of note that the unstable character of the active constituents of commercial ergot is generally recognized, many preparations and samples of the drug being found quite inactive. In view of this it is evident that further work is necessary, and it is proposed to carry out more feeding-experiments with freshly collected ergot if sufficient be obtainable, with the object of testing the matter under more natural conditions. The results will be published in due course.

At the close of July foot-and-mouth disease existed on no less than 31,926 farms in Germany.