

The Live-stock and Meat Division replies,—

The cause of this condition is not exactly determined. Cold and wet could hardly be the cause, as the condition is found in dry districts and in good seasons. A more probable cause is the entry of micro-organisms through the navel when the animal is a day or two old, this leading to enlargement of one or more joints—the so-called “joint evil.” If you can possibly manage it, change your lambing-paddock next season. There is no telling how long the germs may live on a pasture, and it is as well to take every precaution.

DAIRYING PROBLEMS.

“EGO,” Koromatua, Frankton Junction, writes,—

1. Will you please inform me why cows decrease considerably in milk-yield when fed mostly on clover? Towards the end of November my cows were milking well, but since the clover began to flower they have fallen in yield rapidly.

2. My farm is ordinary fern and scrub country, and was put into grass eighteen months ago after the ploughing. The herbage is mostly clover, which grows in great abundance. I should like to encourage the growth of grasses in preference to clovers. I notice that in the paddock where my young calves are fed (on skim-milk) the grasses thrive admirably. The same thing occurred in another paddock used last year. Could you suggest a reason? It is surely not the ammonia in the dung—the clover land should be rich in nitrogen. I top-dressed with basic slag last autumn: could I improve on it?

3. Is there any difference between “ulceration of the womb” and “septic metritis”? What are the symptoms? If the disease is infectious, why are not the same precautions advised as in the case of abortion? There is much trouble this season in the Waikato through cows discharging sometimes a thick whitish matter, and others a brownish fluid. Could you suggest a reason?

The Fields and Experimental Farms Division replies,—

Clover, under ordinary conditions, does not decrease the milk-yield. There is probably some other cause that has not been observed. It should be remembered that when the clover is flowering the period of lactation is lengthening, consequently there is a decrease. In your district clovers are luxuriant when first laid down. You will in all probability find that after the first season the clover will not predominate.

The paddock in which you keep calves is probably smaller than your other enclosures, and during the season when not occupied with calves it will have been closely stocked. Such paddocks are usually convenient, and on this account they are in constant use. Stock fed in other enclosures are brought in for the night, or horses fed in the stable are put there. This brings about complications, which are exhibited in the altered pasturage. Naturally, the actual cause cannot be defined.

The Live-stock and Meat Division replies,—

Evidently the condition referred to is what is termed “metritis” or inflammation of the womb. Owing to the cause generally being the absorption of decomposing material from this organ into the blood-circulation, the condition is usually called “septic metritis.” It is practically a blood-poisoning, the most common cause being retention of the afterbirth, or part of it, and its decomposition. In other cases, especially where the symptoms are seen two days or so after calving, the probability is that some tear or abrasion, either of the uterus or vagina, has occurred. The symptoms shown are not always the same, and may come on two or three days after calving, or not until a week or more afterwards. You may say there is an acute and subacute form. The usual symptoms in the acute form are that the cow has not cleansed, and is not doing as well as she should be. She may not be eating or ruminating, and may be more than ordinarily thirsty, and the secretion of milk diminished, if not suspended. In some cases locomotion may be interfered with, and she may even be down and cannot be made to rise. These cases are sometimes mistaken for milk-fever. A cow, however, suffering from metritis does not lose consciousness, and does not show brain symptoms, such as allowing the eye to be touched with impunity, which you see in milk-fever. If the animal has not cleansed, the afterbirth is generally in a stinking condition. If she has done so, on passing