

BEEKEEPING.

MR. E. DUCKWORTH, Hendley, Patoka, Hawke's Bay, writes,—

Will you please tell me which is the best month to double up colonies of bees? I also wish to know the name and address of the secretary of the Hawke's Bay Beekeepers' Association. The bees are doing exceptionally well here this year.

The Orchards, Gardens, and Apiaries Division replies as follows :—

March is about the best time for doubling up your colonies, which should be done in the following manner: Kill the queen in the weaker hive of the two you wish to unite, then place a single sheet of newspaper between the supers of the two colonies. In a short time the bees will gnaw through the paper and unite peacefully. The Hawke's Bay Beekeepers' Association is now non-existent, but the secretary used to be Mr. Currow, Health Food Depot, Napier. There are beekeepers' associations at Pahiatua and Gisborne.

WEATHER AND MILK-TEST.

MR. E. W. NEWTON, Mokotua, Southland, writes,—

Would you kindly inform me through your *Journal* if the weather-conditions have any effect on milk in regard to testing: if, for instance, a cold snap following a spell of mild weather would have the effect of bringing the test down, although the cows gave less milk during the cold spell? Also, if a continued spell of cold, wet weather would have the effect of keeping the test down, even though the quantity of milk comes down considerably also. To quote a case: The daily quantity of milk of one supplier dropped from about 40 gallons to about 30 gallons in about a fortnight, yet the test during that period was 0.5 lower than for the preceding period, though one would naturally expect it to be higher. Would the cold weather account for this?

The Dairy-produce Division replies,—

Weather-conditions frequently have a very marked effect upon both the quantity of milk given by a cow and its percentage of butter-fat. The amount of milk, as well as its butter-fat test, may be reduced as the result of very cold or very hot weather, or through many other causes. Some cows are affected to a greater extent than others by variations in the weather. The variation you quote is quite common—in fact, much greater variations are experienced by dairy-farmers, up to even 1 per cent. and over in some instances. In actual experience it is found that the fat-percentage in milk rises and falls at times without any apparent reason.

ORCHARD QUERIES.

MR. R. S. LEVESQUE, Cambridge, *via* Goodwood, writes,—

There are three things I would like to know about :—

(1.) The best mixture of manures to make for gooseberry-bushes. (I had thought of mixing slag and kainit in equal parts.)

(2.) The best method of pruning. If I summer-prune, shall I have to prune again in the winter?

(3.) Would you advise me to spray with the Bordeaux mixture or sulphur spray?

The Orchards, Gardens, and Apiaries Division replies,—

(1.) A dressing at the rate of 3 cwt. to 4 cwt. per acre of basic slag, to be followed in early spring by a dressing of superphosphate at the rate of 2 cwt. per acre is recommended.

(2.) Fruit-trees benefit by both summer and winter pruning.

(3.) The Bordeaux mixture has proved a very effective spray for the control of fungus diseases, and on the whole less likely to injure foliage than the sulphur spray.