

## BLACKLEG AND ITS CONTROL.

C. J. REAKES, D.V.Sc., M.R.C.V.S., Director of the Live-stock Division.

BLACKLEG, often termed "black-quarter" or "quarter-ill," is, practically speaking, a disease of cattle alone, though it is said that sheep and horses have very rarely been known to be affected. No cases among these animals have, however, been met with in this country. The disease, fortunately, is present only in limited areas of New Zealand, but the mere fact of its limited distribution renders it necessary to take all possible precautions to prevent its further spread, and at the same time to keep it under control in the already affected localities. This can be done effectively at but slight cost and with but little inconvenience to farmers, provided they co-operate with and assist the departmental officers in carrying out the necessary measures. The affected areas are—

(1.) The Taranaki District, where the disease has existed for several years, but now, thanks to the yearly inoculation of calves rendered necessary by the operation of the Blackleg Regulations, causes practically no loss. This inoculation has become a part of the annual routine of farmers in the district, and is carried out with little or no inconvenience to them, and at no monetary cost.

(2.) Portions of the Auckland District, where regulations similar to those in force in Taranaki come into full operation during the present season.

### NATURE OF THE DISEASE.

Blackleg may be described as a form of blood-poisoning, caused by a specific organism, without whose presence the disease cannot exist. The germs of the disease can retain their vitality in the soil for a long period of time, and it is usually through grazing on land infected with these germs that animals contract the disease. Save in rare instances, only young cattle are susceptible, and it is very unusual to find one under three months or over eighteen months old affected. Further, it is the best-conditioned animals which suffer, particularly those which are making flesh rapidly. Calves while in poor condition are in some way non-susceptible—so much so that direct experimental inoculation with virulent virus may fail to produce any sign of the disease in them. The first symptoms appear in from two to five days after infection has taken place, occasionally earlier.