

In spite of this information, published nine years since, there is still reason to believe that the idea that "wool balls" in the fourth stomach, the true digestive stomach, are the cause of death still exists in the minds of some farmers. But that idea is absolutely fallacious. In 1912 arrangements were made for Inspectors at meat-export works to examine a number of the fourth stomachs of fat healthy lambs killed for export. Of 4,043 examined, 792, or 19.58 per cent., were found to contain "wool balls."

BLOOD-POISONING IN SHEEP AFTER SHEARING AND LAMBS AFTER DOCKING.

Blood-poisoning in sheep and lambs now causes a mortality very small in comparison with what occurred regularly until a few years since, previous to which the annual death-rate caused by it was far too heavy. A bulletin on the subject (Leaflets for Farmers, No. 58) was written by Dr. Gilruth in 1909, and in this a very full description of these troubles is given. Copies are available on application to the Department in Wellington or to any Inspector of Stock. As is shown in this leaflet, the condition of blood-poisoning is set up through a particular micro-organism (the bacillus of malignant œdema) gaining entrance into the system of the sheep or the lamb through wounds or abrasions accidentally occurring during shearing, or through the wounds made in the operations of cutting and tailing. In nearly every case investigated it has been shown that the animals became infected through dust or dirt from contaminated sheep-yards or their immediate surroundings coming in contact with the freshly inflicted wounds. Lambs are now usually cut and tailed in temporary yards formed by hurdles in paddocks, and this practice has given successful results from the point of view of prevention. But it alone is not always sufficient. In one instance which came under my personal notice there was no reason to believe that the yards used were infected, but the human element failed badly. The instrument used was a knife which the operator (whose ideas of cleanliness were far from being up to date) was in the habit of making use of for all sorts of purposes, including the skinning of dead sheep, and it was evident that he took no pains to keep it properly clean. A number of the lambs died of blood-poisoning within forty-eight hours, and a very careful and thorough investigation made on the spot failed to show any other source of infection than the dirty knife.

It must be remembered that the particular micro-organism which causes this form of blood-poisoning is one that reproduces itself by spores (which may be likened to seeds), and that these spores can