

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

IN every instance a question to which an answer is desired in the *Journal* must be accompanied by the full name and the postal address of the inquirer, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. The question should be written on one side of the paper only.

CATERPILLARS IN OATS.

G. H. BRADLEY, Arapohue:—

Kindly advise me whether there is any preventive of caterpillars in oats. Last year most of us farmers on the Northern Wairoa were heavy losers in the oat crops owing to these insects.

The Biologist:—

The commonest species of moth that in the larval or caterpillar stage damages oats and other cereal crops is the native army-worm (*Melanchnra composita*). This insect was extremely destructive last season in many parts of New Zealand. Late-maturing crops are almost always more seriously damaged than early-ripening ones. In districts where caterpillar is bad an effort should be made to have the oat crops ready for harvesting as near to Christmas or the New Year as possible. In certain cases an extensive brood of caterpillars may be on the move even before Christmas, and under such circumstances the crops should be protected if possible. The only satisfactory method is to sacrifice a headland of about 15 yards right round the crop, spraying it with arsenate of lead, 2 lb. to 40 gallons water, as soon as there is any sign of caterpillars. If heavy rain occurs after spraying and before harvesting the sprayed portion may be safe to chaff, and if when spraying takes place the crop is not in full ear the sprayed portion can be used for grain, but care might have to be taken in the using of the straw. The throwing-up of a furrow or the digging of a trench round the crop, smearing the steep edge with tar, is often suggested, and at times will turn the caterpillars from a crop, but this method is not always satisfactory. If a crop is attacked just on harvesting-time it should be cut instantly, as a cut crop never suffers to the same extent as a standing one. Direct methods of control are, however, often quite impossible to carry out, as the attacks are generally extremely sudden and no warning is given. It would certainly be best to try and have your oats maturing as early as possible, and also not allow any rank growth during the previous summer in the paddocks near those that are to be devoted to cereal-growing. This is most important, as the moth for preference lays its eggs on areas which are not well fed down.

FOOT-ROT IN COWS.

“DAIRYMAN,” Little River:—

During the past season I had several cases of foot-rot in my dairy herd. In appearance it was the same as foot-rot in sheep, and smelled the same. The first signs were severe lameness, then swelling and heat, then discharge from between the toes. I tried treatment with bluestone solution, and also used butter of antimony, but without much success. I would be glad of any information as to prevention and treatment.

The Live-stock Division:—

Ointments of any sort are not so efficient in cases of foot trouble as solutions, as ointments do not penetrate to the root of the disease. We would recommend that you have a wooden foot-bath made and fixed to the floor of a bail. Into this put sheep-dip of the ordinary strength, and then bail up the affected animal, and allow her to stand there at least ten minutes every other day.