

## THE PIG SHORTAGE.

### AN INQUIRY AND ADVICE FOR FARMERS.

By the Live-stock Division.

A SHORTAGE of pigs having been apparent in the Dominion for some time past special attention has been given to the matter by the Department. With a view to obtaining all information possible, Inspectors of Stock throughout the Dominion were recently circularized and asked to report as to whether they were of opinion that farmers in their districts were keeping pigs in less number than during the preceding year, and, if so, what they considered to be the reason for this. The replies received and published below are self-explanatory. In view of the trend of the dairy industry in the direction of utilizing dairy-factory by-products for commercial purposes, thus rendering them unavailable for pig-feeding, steps are being taken to furnish farmers with direct information and general advice regarding pig-rearing and pig-feeding under the changing conditions now existing and likely to continue. Demonstrations on the lines of farmers themselves producing on their own farms suitable and payable food for pigs are also being arranged. The Inspectors' replies from the various districts are as follows:—

*Hawera.*—A less number of pigs are being kept this year than last year, the reason given being that last season calves were fetching a good price, and in consequence farmers disposed of their breeding-sows. Another reason given for people not keeping pigs is on account of the cheesemaking, as when the whey is separated the feeding-value of the residue is very slight, and consequently food has to be purchased. It is certain that a farmer cannot rear pigs and calves in large numbers at the same time, and it is a question which will give the best returns; but it is anticipated that there will be a big demand for pigs next season.

*Amberley.*—A less number of pigs is being kept, the reason given being shortage and high cost of pig-feed, high cost of weaners, and the rearing of calves.

*Timaru.*—Pigs are more plentiful than they were last year. Pigs are not kept to any great extent in this district, and then only by the small farmer.

*Balclutha.*—A less number is being kept, the reason given being more interest taken in calf-rearing and scarcity of pig-food. Another reason given is that the whey at the cheese-factories is being put through the separator, thus reducing its value as a pig-food.

*Hamilton.*—There has been a big reduction in the number of pigs owing to high prices being obtained for calves. This year calves are abnormally low in price, and bacon-pigs are selling at a good price, and as a result pig-breeding will again become popular.

*Auckland.*—A gradual reduction in number kept, owing to high prices being obtained for calves and to the scarcity and high price of pig-feed. As the price for the latter has now dropped more pigs will be kept this year. Another reason given for the decrease in pigs is the manufacture of casein and dried milk, thus shortening the supply of skim-milk and whey.

*Woodville.*—The number of pigs kept has been reduced by 50 per cent. during past two years. This has been brought about owing to the high prices being obtained for calves and to the increased cost of pig-feed; but if the present price for bacon-pigs continues farmers will devote more time to this industry.

*Hastings.*—Fewer pigs being kept than last year, owing to increased cost of food and to good prices being obtained for calves.