

FIREBLIGHT.

Although it is a little on the early side at this juncture to state definitely that the commercial areas in the Auckland District are entirely free from fireblight infection for this season, it may now be reasonably supposed that as no infection has so far taken place in those areas there is little risk of an outbreak in regard to blossom-infection. However, it does not follow that other districts are yet entirely safe in this respect, and the strict watch which has been maintained should be continued without relaxation.

STRAWBERRIES.

Harvesting the crop is now the chief work of the commercial grower. Already large quantities have been put on the Auckland market, and the regulations for the packing of this class of fruit for sale have been brought into operation. Strawberry-growers generally in the Auckland District are to be congratulated on the manner in which they have come into line in compliance with the regulations. They will be gratified to know that retailers report increased demand by the public on account of the improvement in the pack.

—*J. W. Collard, Orchard Instructor, Auckland.*

POULTRY-KEEPING.

SUMMER MANAGEMENT.

JANUARY is one of the most trying months of the year, both in regard to the adult and developing stock. It is therefore a time which demands the greatest care and diligence on the part of the poultry-keeper for the birds to do their best. Especially is it necessary to give the late-hatched chickens the best possible care and attention that can be bestowed upon them if they are to make payable layers. Good shade is imperative. In addition they must receive an ample supply of good nourishing food. Green food is especially necessary at this period of the year, and cannot be oversupplied. Cleaning operations must be vigorously pursued, or vermin are almost sure to give trouble. At all costs guard against overcrowding—the common cause of young stock receiving a check in development. Do not attempt to rear weaklings or deformed stock. They should never be bothered with; better far to destroy them at the outset, and thereby save the worry of trying to rear birds which, if they come to maturity, may never pay for their keep. Again, it is the weakling which is apt to catch every passing ailment, and may thus be the means of introducing serious trouble into a flock.

I would again urge the importance of weeding out all surplus cockerels that have attained a marketable age—namely, those between four and a half and five months old. There is a great advantage in having these out of the way. Not only is there a saving in the present costly food, but the clearance also allows more space for the growing pullets, to say nothing of the saving in labour and attendance.