

## CALF-MARKING.

### THE MOVEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND.

"CALF-MARKING" is the term applied to a system of ear-tattooing which provides permanent identification of heifer calves sired by registered purebred bulls from cows tested for yield and proved profitable butterfat producers.

In this country the system was inaugurated by the New Zealand Co-operative Herd Testing Association, operating in the Auckland District, 305 calves having been marked in 1925-26, the first year of operation. Besides this organization, the system is now being carried out by at least seven other herd-testing associations, as follows: Bay of Plenty Group Herd Testing Association, Wairarapa Herd Testing Association, Northern Waioa Herd Testing Association, Te Aroha Herd Testing Association, Taranaki Co-operative Herd Testing Association, Bush-Horowhenua Herd Testing Association, Bay of Islands Herd Testing Association. Possibly there are others of which the Department has no advice, but the list given serves to indicate that the movement is developing rapidly in the North Island. Several more associations are arranging to take up the work next season.

Statistics showing the total number of calves marked in the Dominion last spring are not available, but the New Zealand Co-operative Herd Testing Association advises that it registered some four thousand calves.

As already indicated, the marking is carried out by means of a perforated stained tattoo in the ear, and is confined to heifer calves. The calf must have been sired by a registered purebred bull, and the dam must have produced, in a lactation period of not more than 305 days, a certain minimum butterfat requirement according to age. For a first-calver the standard is set at 250 lb., for a second-calver 275 lb., and for a third-calver or older animal 300 lb. In addition, the dam must be branded or otherwise identifiable under the rules of and in a manner satisfactory to the association. For purposes of calf-marking only heifer calves from dams that have actually been tested by certain herd-testing groups are registered. Particulars of calves qualifying under the rules of the association are entered in a register and a certificate is issued.

The actual system of marking may be outlined as follows: A general index letter—"T"—is the registered mark of the Dominion Group Herd Testing Federation. This index mark, of course, remains permanent. The index mark is followed by a letter which indicates the dairying season in which the calf was born, thus providing a key to age. This age or year letter is followed by the registration number of the calf in the Heifer Calf Register. Thus, for instance, "T B 555" would indicate that the calf so marked was number 555 in the register of the Dominion Group Herd Testing Federation for the year 1926-27.

The influence of calf-marking properly carried out should ultimately be far-reaching and of great assistance to the dairy industry. It provides a means of identifying calves with more or less proved butterfat backing, and, in districts where calf-marking is in operation,