

that have accrued through dairy-herd testing, trap-nesting and egg-laying trials in poultry-keeping, and progeny tests with pigs. In view of the great importance of sheep to New Zealand, it is suggested that the time is ripe for starting some scheme of testing both the wool and mutton production of our flocks. This would show which were the uneconomic producers, so that they might be culled and eventually only the best producers used for breeding purposes.

A few of the American agricultural colleges have attempted work on the lines of wool-testing, and the results show quite clearly that, if properly organized, there is a great future in front of the work. The last paragraph of Publication No. 1048 of the United States Department of Agriculture summarizes the position very clearly as follows: "It is evident, therefore, that while season must be considered and every possible means used to offset adverse climatic conditions by proper feeding and management, if good wool yields are to be obtained it is most important to select and maintain in the flock those ewes with heavier clean weight of fleece and greater length of staple, and to use rams which transmit these qualities."

While stud-sheep breeders have wrought considerable improvement in our sheep it is questionable if they have won more than half the battle. What is required now is a system whereby the breeder will be able to select his animals on a knowledge of their value as economic converters of food combined with the quantity and quality of their produce. The work of testing sheep will not be carried out so easily as that of cattle or poultry testing, since a number of variables enter into the work. Simply breeding from sheep with the heaviest fleece may lead in time to a strain of sheep with one or more of the following objectionable features: (1) Wool very heavy in the grease; (2) very big-carcassed sheep, (3) sheep with exceptionally long wool, (4) wool too coarse in the fibre for the standards of the breed.

The first objection can be overcome by determining the approximate cleaned scoured weight of each fleece, and to do this it will be necessary to take a representative sample from each fleece. This would then be scoured, dried, and weighed, so that the amount of clean wool in the fleece could be determined. The second objection can be overcome by careful observations of the carcass qualities of each sheep immediately after shearing. Where scales are available weights would be a useful check on the eye observations, especially if they could be accompanied by some system of measurement. The third and fourth objections might be overcome by having the staple length and spinning quality of the wool checked on the samples taken for scouring purposes.

PREPARING THE CLIP FOR MARKET.

While the preparation of the wool-clip for market may not come strictly under the heading of wool-improvement, care in this respect is equally important in any endeavour that is to improve the returns from wool. This is becoming more and more an age of specialization and standardization, and the care and treatment which may have been good enough for wool some years ago are really not sufficient at the present time if the best returns are to be obtained. The subject cannot be dealt with fully in an article of this nature, but the essential points