

## NOTE ON THE CARE OF WEANER AND YEARLING HEIFERS.

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CONSIDERABLE mortality occurred in this class of stock during the winter of 1936, and much of the loss was directly or indirectly due to internal parasites, chiefly stomach-worm, though lung-worm was troublesome in some instances. In South Auckland the summer was wet, and this favoured the survival of a large percentage of the parasites during the period passed in the larval stages outside the host. Further, the sloppy pasture-growth during a wet season itself predisposes to a loose state of the bowels, and seems to be less suitable for young animals than the feed available in a drier season.

There is an intricate relationship between the type of food and the presence of parasites in producing the characteristic unthriftiness, debility, anæmia, and scouring usually (and in most cases rightly) put down to worms. It is not always easy to know just how much of the trouble is due to type of feed in itself and how much to the presence of parasites.

In some instances a single treatment with a reliable worm-drench checks mortality and is followed by improvement in the remainder. At other times repeated drenching seems of little benefit unless aided by better feeding. The Rowett Institute has shown that with young sheep some supplementary feeding greatly reduces the number of parasites that becomes established in the sheep. In Australia Clunies Ross has shown much the same thing, and states that, in combating some of the small worms resistant to drenching, most benefit comes from improving the feed. With young cattle, observant feeders in this country have remarked on the importance of improving the feeding of worm-infested heifers by crushed oats, bran, and linseed-meal, and even by putting the young animals back on a ration of milk.

Routine drenching of young sheep is accepted as a necessity on many sheep-farms. The same conditions apply in young cattle. Parasitic disease is one of the penalties to be paid for permanent pastures and heavy stocking, and must be guarded against. Drenching of young stock once mortality has commenced is sometimes disappointing in its results. Among the several reasons for this are—(a) Treatment is not begun until all animals are already in an anæmic state and have lost condition; (b) insufficient attention is paid to supplementing the action of the drench by some improvement in feeding (complete elimination of worms, even if it were possible, would still leave the animal in an anæmic, weakly state calling for nursing and tonics); (c) animals are returned to the same pastures and reinfection is constantly taking place.

The symptoms of parasitic gastritis are unthriftiness, harsh coat, and a "skinny" appearance, weakness, anæmia indicated by pallor of lining of eyelids, &c., and nearly always some degree of scouring. Somewhat similar symptoms are seen in "bush-sick" cattle, but scouring is not a feature.

Indications at present point to the coming summer being favourable to the development of parasitic disease, and in view of the increase in value of dairy yearlings additional care is justified to bring them