

CARE OF LIVESTOCK DURING DECEMBER

Contributed by the Animal Research Division.

THE year's production can be materially affected by feed conditions during summer. Cows fed poorly now not only produce less milk during summer, but will dry off earlier in autumn. Dairy statistics show that long lactation is very important, so start feeding silage or other supplementary milk-producing fodders as soon as pasture begins to dry off. Do not wait for milk production to show a material fall.

As each lot of lambs is sold draft off their mothers together with any dry ewes which may remain in the flock. If feed is short and the ewes have very little milk, it usually pays to wean all the lambs, which can then be given the best grazing available. The ewes should be shorn and those which are to be retained should be placed on short pasture with ample water. This will help to reduce their condition and will result in a better lambing percentage next season.

CARE OF EWES AND FAT LAMBS

If ewes with lambs are to be shorn, every effort must be made to reduce the time during which lambs are away from the ewes, as it is easy to dry off ewes at this time of the year. They should be brought to the shed in small mobs and should be dagged before reaching the board.

Farmers who wish to eradicate foot-rot from their flocks should read the Department of Agriculture's Bulletin No. 325.

FOOT-ROT CAN BE ERADICATED

This is the season in which the eradication campaign must be planned.

Sows should be brought into the house a week or two before farrowing and fed up to 6 gallons of milk per day, but this should be reduced to 2 gallons plus bran, if available, on the due date. Watch for signs of constipation in heavy, in-pig sows.

PIG FEEDING

Baconers from spring litters should be sold as sow feed requirements increase, as it is important not to starve the sows and litters. These sows require 6 gallons of milk plus an additional gallon for each pig in the litter. Meal may replace part of this ration at the rate of 1lb. of meal for every gallon of milk. Orders for meal supplies for next spring should now be placed with the merchants.

If cows are returning to service, examine the mating records to see if any particular bull is to blame. If so, get a Veterinarian or Stock Inspector to collect a semen sample for examination. Be careful in purchasing replacement bulls. If possible, buy a young bull that has not been used previously. Never buy a bull in the saleyard unless his full history is known. Washing out cows seldom helps and may cause trouble if irritant fluids such as kerosene are used. It often pays to consult a Veterinarian as soon as the cows are noticed returning to service in unusual numbers. He cannot be expected to diagnose the trouble months later.

COWS RETURNING TO THE BULL

So-called roup is often fowl pox. Send specimens to the Animal Research Station, Wallaceville, for diagnosis. Outbreaks of this disease can be prevented by vaccination, full details of which may be obtained from the nearest Poultry Instructor of the Department of Agriculture.

The zinc lining of new galvanised pipes may be dissolved by dairy by-products flowing through them and the by-products then prove poisonous when fed to pigs. Consult the nearest Veterinarian before making a new installation.

