



Design and Construction of Sheep-drafting Yards

By J. E. DUNCAN, Wool Supervisor, Department of Agriculture, Wellington.

IN the first section of this article, which appeared in the July issue, it was stressed that there is no ideal sheep-drafting yard, and the six plans in this the third and final section of the article are included merely in an attempt to show the possibilities of certain arrangements and features. It is not intended that they should be followed slavishly, but that they should be used merely as a working basis which can be modified to suit individual needs. There is no reason why points from several of the designs should not be incorporated in a single set of yards. It must also be realised that in many cases a full complement of gates is included to show the potentialities of the layout, but a farmer in building the yards need not include all these and can simplify the design according to his own requirements.

BEFORE the plans are discussed short sections have been given on foot-rotting equipment and ramps. Though they are not strictly parts of drafting yards, they are often closely associated with them.

perly trimmed and cleaned up it is necessary to have the hoof immersed in the bluestone or formalin for only

a comparatively short period. W. I. B. Beveridge, the Australian research worker who first placed the treatment of foot-rot on a sound and scientific basis, says that as little as 10 seconds is sufficient time of immersion, provided the hoof has been properly trimmed and that the bluestone is a strong (30 per cent.) solution.

If hooves are trimmed in the woolshed, working conditions are better for the men concerned than if trimming is done in a hot, dusty yard, and there is the added advantage that after passing over the battens the feet of sheep are cleaner and easier to deal with. Numbers of farmers do the whole operation under cover by having foot-rot troughs installed as integral parts of their woolsheds. The sheep return to the grating floors after passing through the trough and are kept there until the feet are dry before being returned to the paddocks.

FOOT-ROT TROUGHS AND BATHS

Although the ideal would be to have foot-rotting equipment well away from the main yards, it is now common practice to include in the yards or woolshed a trough or bath to hold the liquid, usually a strong solution of bluestone or formalin, used in the treatment of foot-rot. This equipment can range from a simple trough through which the sheep walk in single file to the elaborate layout shown in Fig. 24 on this page.

The main requirement in eradicating foot-rot is thorough trimming and paring of the overgrown horn of the hooves. Without this, treatment with any solution or other medicament is largely a waste of effort and time. When the feet have been pro-

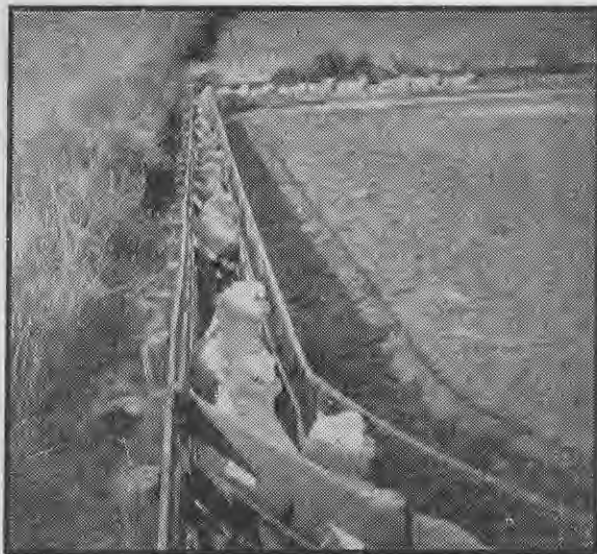


Fig. 24—"Follow the leader" through a long foot-rot trough built round the outside of yards.

Most installations are in or attached to the yards and usually take the form either of a race with a trough at the bottom or a small pen with a watertight concrete floor with raised edges which can be used to hold the solution. The choice between these two main methods seems to be one largely of personal preference, although frequently the layout of the existing yards may be the determining factor.

It would be much better to keep affected sheep away from the yards, where they will contaminate a number of pens and make it easy to re-infect clean sheep, but if this cannot be arranged, the whole flock should pass through the bluestone each time as a preventive measure. Some farmers use portable wooden troughs for bluestone treatment and erect temporary netting pens so that treatment can be carried out on the spot.