Care of Livestock during September

Contributed by the Animal Research Division

FOR the first month or 6 weeks of life a lamb depends almost entirely on its mother's milk. Ewes are capable of producing more milk than a single lamb can drink in the early part of lactation.

CARE OF EWES WITH TWIN LAMBS

Twins, on the other hand, can soon drink all the milk which the ewe can produce. For this reason ewes with twin lambs should be drafted off and grazed together on good paddocks. Separation is most easily done immediately after lambing.

Well-reared cattle at Ruakura out-produced their poorly reared mates by a total of 40lb. fat over the first two lactations, when both groups were well fed from first calving onward.

ROTATIONAL GRAZING OF CALVES

Frequent changes to good clean pasture are essential if calves are to be successfully reared. (See "Care of Livestock" notes in last month's "Journal".) This rotational grazing avoids deaths in winter, eliminates the need for drenching against worms, and produces yearlings 100lb. heavier than those kept in the one paddock for weeks at a time.

Autumn-saved pasture is almost equal to high-quality spring pasture as a milk-producing fodder. It should, therefore, be rationed to the milking cows to make it last until the spring feed comes away and hardens up. An electric fence is essential for efficient utilisation, enabling the pasture to be grazed in small breaks. Unless sufficient reserves of this pasture are available for full feeding, the remainder of the feed should be made up with silage. Make sure enough hay is retained to balance the lush spring growth.

FEEDING THE MILKING HERD

When the autumn-saved pasture is finished the herd should be rotated round the farm. Paddocks should be small enough to maintain a concentration of 20 to 30 cows per acre. If necessary, larger paddocks may be subdivided with the electric fence. The aim should be to graze pasture when it is 4 to 6in. high, as it is then at its most nutritious stage. Cows should not be kept for more than 1 or 2 days in the paddock. If necessary, cleaning up after them should be done with dry stock.

Late-farrowed spring litters should receive special attention, as they will be approaching weaning age. Creep feeding is a very important factor in the production of heavy weaners, and best results will be obtained by having a supply of meal and milk always before the litter. Weaned pigs must be well fed, and if meal has been used before weaning, its use should be continued for at least a fortnight to avoid an after-weaning check. The meal ration will be reduced as the skimmed milk supply increases. It is preferable to feed weaners with meal up to half their daily rations and give the milk saved to the store pigs rather than feed meal to the older pigs at this stage.

CARE OF PIGS

After weaning sows should receive sufficient milk and meal to enable them to regain the weight lost during previous suckling. They should be hand-mated, and once safely in pig may be allowed to subsist on good pasture.

Mastitis is usually most prevalent in spring. Milk from all quarters should be carefully examined each day in a strip cup. If there is any abnormality, the quarter should be treated without delay, three tubes of penicillin cerate being used at 24-hour intervals. Prompt treatment at this time of the year will greatly reduce loss in production from light or dry quarters.

MASTITIS

On farms where scabby mouth occurs each new crop of lambs should be vaccinated, and this is most conveniently done at marking. If lambs are not protected, they are liable to suffer a severe check, as the disease makes eating very painful. The vaccine gives very good protection if properly used. Care is necessary to keep the needle prong clear of grease, as if it becomes blocked, no vaccine is applied and lambs may still be susceptible. Ewes which have not previously been exposed to the disease should be vaccinated at the same time as the lambs.

VACCINATION AGAINST SCABBY MOUTH

To prevent coccidiosis in chickens it is necessary to keep them growing steadily. Any check is dangerous. Cleanliness is very important, as the disease spreads through the soiling of food by droppings. If an outbreak occurs, sulphamezathine or sulphaquinoxaline should be used in the drinking water. Full particulars of dosage may be obtained from the Department of Agriculture's Poultry Instructors.

COCCIDIOSIS IN POULTRY

The work carried out on X chick disease during the last 2 years has shown it to be a form of vitamin E deficiency, possibly arising from the feeding of certain batches of wheat.

Outbreaks of X chick disease have been confined so far to the South Island, and poultry farmers in the areas affected in previous years are advised to add 5 per cent. wheat-germ meal to the chick mash as a precautionary measure.

X CHICK DISEASE

An article describing the results of the investigation carried out on this disease will appear in the September issue of the "Journal of Agriculture".

Dairy Produce Graded for Export

THE following figures showing quantities of dairy produce graded for export during June and for the 11 months ended 30 June 1953, with comparative figures for the same month and 11-monthly period of 1951-52, have been compiled by the Dairy Division of the Department of Agriculture from figures supplied by divisional officers at the various grading ports:—

BUTTER

Period	Creamery	Tons Whey	Total	Percentage inc. or dec.
June 1953	758	27	785	—
June 1952	430	11	441	—
Increase or decrease ..	+328	+16	+344	+78.004
11 months ended 30/6/53	160,025	3,147	163,172	—
11 months ended 30/6/52	154,898	2,647	157,545	—
Increase or decrease ..	+5,127	+500	+5,627	+3.571

Butter in store at 30 June 1953 was 10,513 tons

CHEESE

Period	White	Tons Coloured	Total	Percentage inc. or dec.
June 1953	1,801	—	1,801	—
June 1952	1,145	—	1,145	—
Increase or decrease ..	+656	—	+656	+57.292
11 months ended 30/6/53	103,283	140	103,423	—
11 months ended 30/6/52	91,047	751	91,798	—
Increase or decrease ..	+12,236	—611	+11,625	+12.663

Cheese in store at 30 June 1953 was 19,511 tons

If these figures are converted into butterfat equivalent, there is an increase of 5.462 per cent. in butterfat graded for the 11 months as compared with the corresponding period of the preceding season. The above figures refer only to butter and cheese graded for export, and owing to diversions which may take place from time to time, they are not necessarily a true indication of production trends.