

Care of Livestock during July

Contributed by the Animal Research Division

WHERE pulpy kidney occurs in lambs under 6 weeks of age its incidence can be reduced by vaccinating the ewes before lambing. If ewes have never been vaccinated, best results will be obtained from two doses of vaccine given at least a month apart. Ewes which were vaccinated last year will require only one vaccination. The last (or the only) vaccination should be given about a fortnight before lambing and this can be done quite safely if ewes are handled carefully. Very poor immunity results where the ewes are vaccinated much earlier. If most losses from pulpy kidney occur in lambs over 6 weeks of age, vaccination of ewes is of no value, but vaccination of lambs at marking, with a second dose later, may help.

PULPY KIDNEY IN LAMBS

Losses from blood poisoning in lambing ewes and marked lambs can be greatly reduced, if not eliminated, by vaccinating the ewes with blackleg vaccine about a fortnight before lambing. As the immunity which passes from the ewe to the lamb in the first milk does not persist for many weeks, lambs should be marked early. To obtain the best results it may be necessary to divide the ewes into early and late lambers, which should be vaccinated separately before lambing.

Advice concerning vaccination can be obtained from any office of the Department of Agriculture. Where possible ewes should lamb in clean spelled paddocks, and lambs should always be marked in clean temporary yards. Sometimes losses from blood poisoning occur in lambing ewes that have not been vaccinated. If losses are occurring, it is too late to vaccinate. It may be possible to save some ewes by treating them with penicillin, if the penicillin is used early enough. It is important that blood poisoning should be confirmed, and the local veterinarian should be consulted. After such confirmation all ewes which are assisted in lambing should be treated by penicillin injection. This should be an emergency measure and should not replace vaccination, which is the cheapest and most certain means of preventing blood poisoning.

BLOOD POISONING IN EWES AND LAMBS

Heavy losses from sleepy sickness sometimes occur in ewes carrying twins or heavy single lambs. These losses may be prevented by ensuring that ewes do not suffer a check just before lambing. If necessary, they should be divided into early and late lambers and drafted on to the best feed available 3 to 4 weeks before lambing. Research has shown that poor feed for 5 weeks before lambing can reduce the fleece weight by more than ½ lb.

Ringworm in calves is sometimes troublesome, especially in poorly nourished calves. Before any remedy is applied the scales should be removed by rubbing in a mixture of equal parts of soft soap and lard and scraping off the softened scabs the next day. The bare patches should then be dressed with an ointment consisting of 1 part of salicylic acid and 8 parts of lard, or any registered stock remedy for ringworm which is available. As the infection can be transmitted to man, it is wise to wear rubber gloves when treating ringworm. In any case the hands and arms should be washed thoroughly immediately after the dressings are applied.

Hay made from ergotised grass will cause lameness and sometimes even loss of feet in cattle. The small black

SLEEPY SICKNESS IN EWES

ergots which replace the seeds of ryegrass and other grasses can be easily seen, and if they are present in large numbers, the hay should not be used. Similar trouble often occurs when cattle are grazed on tall fescue grass, even when no ergots are present. This grass should be regarded as poisonous and should not be grazed by cattle.

It is imperative that cows should be well fed for 6 to 8 weeks after calving. They should have access to hay at all times, and if the pasture is poor, they should also receive up to 20 lb. of silage per day. Early calving cows should be given about 2 hours' grazing per day on autumn-saved pasture and in addition should be fed as much silage as they will eat.

At the start of a new season cows should be trained to let down their milk quickly and completely by the establishment of a fixed milking routine, so that the cows are brought into the shed, bailed up, washed, and milked in the same way at each milking. Anything which upsets the cows must be avoided. A brief but vigorous wash followed by the withdrawal of a squirt of milk from each quarter into a strip cup is the best method of stimulating the flow of milk. This will also help in detecting cases of mastitis early.

WINTER FEEDING OF COWS

As the duration of let-down is limited, cups should be put on immediately after the washing and starting process. A good milk flow indicator should be used and as soon as this shows that milk flow is slowed to ½ lb. per minute the cups should be pulled down until milk flow again falls to this rate, when they should be removed at once. Massaging of the udder while the cups are pulled down should be practised only with cows which are known to need it.

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MILKING METHODS ARE IMPORTANT

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Dairy Produce Graded for Export

THE following figures showing quantities of dairy produce graded for export during March and for the 8 months ended 31 March 1957, with comparative figures for the same month and 8 months of 1955-56 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 (tons)	Total (tons)	Percentage inc. or dec.
March 1957	9,132	254	9,386	—
March 1956	12,846	265	13,111	—
Increase or decrease ..	-3,714	-11	-3,725	-28.411
8 months ended 31/3/57	139,147	2,515	141,662	—
8 months ended 31/3/56	148,228	2,569	150,797	—
Increase or decrease ..	-9,081	-54	-9,135	-6.058

Butter in store at 31 March 1957 was 26,126 tons

Note: In addition to the butter graded for export 1,576 tons of ice cream base were graded for export at Auckland.

CHEESE

Period	White (tons)	Coloured (tons)	Total (tons)	Percentage inc. or dec.
March 1957	7,141	858	7,999	—
March 1956	7,060	1,639	8,699	—
Increase or decrease ..	+81	-781	-700	-8.047
8 months ended 31/3/57	68,177	9,256	77,433	—
8 months ended 31/3/56	66,837	11,821	78,658	—
Increase or decrease ..	+1,340	-2,565	-1,225	-1.557

Cheese in store at 31 March 1957 was 26,868 tons

If these figures are converted into butterfat equivalent, there is a decrease of 5.201 per cent. in butterfat graded for the 8 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.