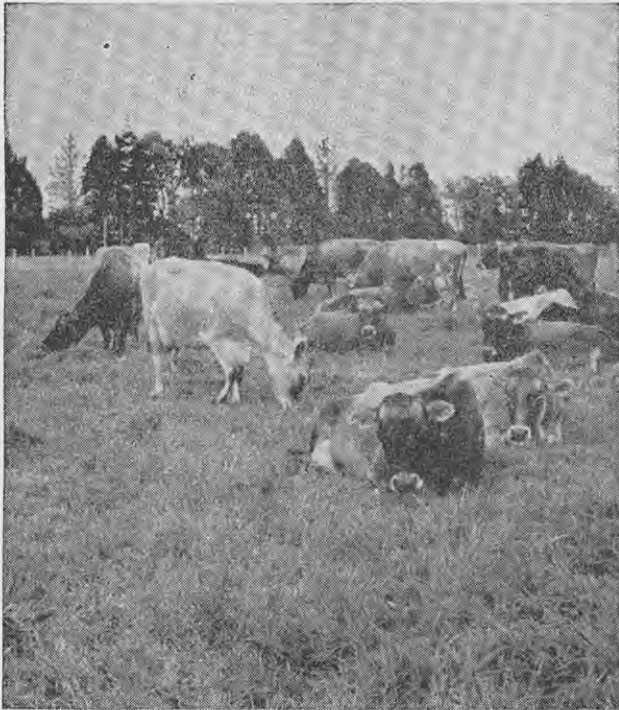


Care of Livestock during September



Contributed by the Animal Research Division

FOR the first month or 6 weeks of life the 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. 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.

CARE OF EWES WITH TWIN LAMBS

Over 10 years at Ruakura well-reared heifers have out-produced their poorly reared mates by an average of 21lb. of butterfat in the first lactation when both were well fed after calving. Frequent changes to good, clean pasture are essential if calves are to be successfully reared. 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. Further information on the good rearing of dairy stock is contained in Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 228, "Good Rearing of Dairy Stock".

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 of autumn-saved pasture enabling it to be grazed in small breaks. Unless sufficient reserves of this pasture are available for full feeding, the balance 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 should be subdivided with the electric fence. Aim at grazing pasture when it is 4in. to 6in. high, as it is then at its most nutritious stage. Do not keep cows for more than 1 or 2 days in the paddock. If necessary, clean up after them with dry stock.

Late-farrowed spring litters should receive special attention, since these will be approaching weaning age. Creep feeding is the secret of the heavy weaner, and best results will be obtained by having a supply

CARE OF PIGS 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 can be reduced as the skimmed milk supply increases. It is preferable at this stage to feed meal to weaners as up to half their daily rations and give the milk saved to the store pigs than to feed meal to the older 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.

On farms where scabby mouth occurs each new crop of lambs should be vaccinated. This is done most conveniently at marking. If lambs are not protected, they are liable to suffer a severe

VACCINATION AGAINST SCABBY MOUTH 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; 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 their lambs.

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, treat the quarter without delay, using three tubes of penicillin cerate at 24-hour intervals. Prompt treatment at this time of the year will greatly reduce loss in production from light or dry quarters.

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 dosages may be obtained from Department of Agriculture Poultry Instructors.

The work carried out on X chick disease has shown it to be a form of vitamin E deficiency, possibly arising from feeding certain batches of wheat. So far outbreaks of X chick disease have been confined to the South Island, and poultry farmers in the areas affected in previous years are advised to add 5 per cent. of wheat germ meal to the chick mash as a precautionary measure.

An article describing the results of the investigation carried out on this disease appeared in the September 1953 issue of "The New Zealand Journal of Agriculture".