

when absorbed into the body, causes marked concentration of the blood and consequently failure of the blood circulation.

Suitable Varieties

In the selection of a suitable variety of beet one further point has to be considered; namely, the amount of the root that grows above the ground. This varies considerably with the variety. For use in break feeding with an electric fence the beet needed is one which does not grow too deeply in the ground and which produces a high amount of feed per acre without having a dry matter content high enough to make it excessively dangerous.

The fodder beets which best fulfil both these requirements are the varieties Red Otofte and Korsroe, which grow with only about half the root in the ground and are of moderate dry matter content.

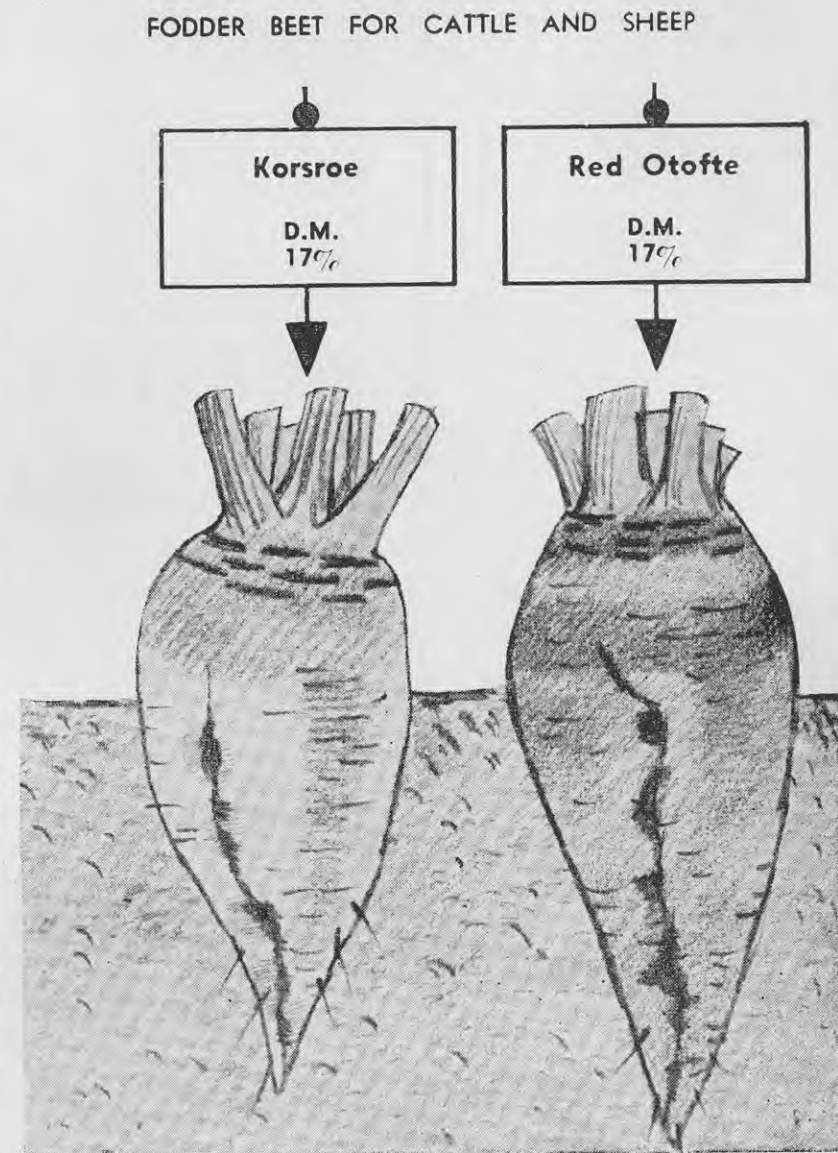
The maximum amount of fodder beets such as Red Otofte and Korsroe which can safely be fed is about 40lb. per day for a Jersey cow and about 60lb. for a Friesian, and about 6lb. for an adult Romney ewe. This maximum amount must be reached gradually over about 2 to 3 weeks after feeding of the beet begins. Up to 10lb. are allowed for the first 3 days and 15lb. for the next 3, the quantity being gradually increased to the maximum during the following week or two. The quantity of roots fed per cow should be fairly accurately assessed. A few beets should be weighed, and then if the number of plants per row is counted, an estimate can be made of the number of rows required for a day's break or to be pulled.

If the ration is not introduced gradually in the manner described or if stock break into a crop and gorge themselves on beet, indigestion and poisoning are certain to occur.

Precautions Required

If varieties with a higher dry matter content than Red Otofte or Korsroe are fed to cattle or sheep, extreme care must be taken and the ration should be reduced below that recommended for these varieties. Information on the dry matter content of the different varieties can be obtained from the local Instructor in Agriculture.

In addition to this danger the tops may also cause two other types of poisoning, but they are less likely to occur and have not been recorded in New Zealand in cattle or sheep on



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fodder beet. One is nitrite poisoning and the other oxalate poisoning. The former is particularly liable to occur if the tops are fed off when immature. Poisoned animals may show staggers and laboured breathing or there may be sudden death without signs of sickness beforehand. To save an animal affected with this type of poisoning veterinary assistance should be sought at once. The oxalate poisoning produces signs similar to those seen in milk fever and can be cured by the same injection as is used for this disease.

Again it should be emphasised that if trouble does occur when cattle or sheep are put on fodder beet, the main thing to do is to stop feeding it for a week or two, and then introduce it again gradually with a lower maximum intake.

Though this report has concentrated on the dangers associated with fodder beet, it is emphasised that it is a very valuable winter crop for both cattle and sheep and that digestive upsets or poisoning will not occur if the crop is managed correctly.