

HORSES.

The number in the colony, as taken from the census returns of the 4th April, 1891, was 211,040.

It is to be regretted that there is still great neglect shown in the selection of breeding stock, and to this must be attributed the existence of the large number of weedy animals.

A circular was issued to the various Agricultural and Pastoral Societies in April last year, asking them for an expression of opinion as to the advisability of imposing a tax upon stallions. A number of replies were received, about half of which were in favour of it; but I have every reason to believe that now, if the question were asked, it would be found receiving greater support. This is a matter worthy of the earnest consideration of every breeder of horses.

It is an undeniable fact that, for anything like a good horse, a ready market can always be found at a remunerative price; but for weedy sorts there is very little demand.

Disease.—There have been reports from several districts of the prevalence of the bot fly, and also of horses dying from its effects; but although a few may have died, showing bots in the stomach, yet from the information received it cannot be said to have increased so as to cause any alarm. Inquiries, however, are now being made as to the latest remedies, and when the season approaches it is hoped these will be available for public information.

Subjoined I beg to hand extracts from the reports of the District Inspectors.

I have &c.,

The Hon. J. McKenzie,
Minister of Lands.

JOHN D. RITCHIE, Chief Inspector.

No. 1.

Mortality among Lambs, Hawera District.

SIR,—

Live Stock Department, Wellington, 15th February, 1890.

I have the honour to report having received two sheep from Inspector Monro, from a flock in the Hawera district. All the sheep in this flock are reported to be looking in a very unhealthy state, with many deaths from unknown cause.

I made a careful *post mortem* examination of the two sheep sent, and, without entering into any technical details, I may say I am of opinion they were suffering from "Anæmia" or "poverty of blood."

As to the cause of this, it is perhaps somewhat difficult to give a correct opinion without seeing the flock in its natural condition. This trouble is, however, common in all countries where sheep are kept, and, in this instance, is perhaps due to keeping the sheep on country that has become "sheep sick," so to speak. The food-supply may in a certain sense be abundant, but, on examining it, it will ultimately be found to be inadequately provided with material fitted for the manufacture of healthy blood.

To get these sheep into a healthy state, endeavour must be made to supply the apparent want of the albuminous and tissue-forming elements of the blood. This may be accomplished on the land where the animals are located by an addition to the grasses upon which they are feeding of some easily-digested and nutritive material, such as corn or cake, or the animals may be moved to land of a different character, where the natural food is less likely to induce this condition. A few oats or bran, or a little-linseed cake, seem to answer the purpose well, together with the addition of a little common salt and some preparation of iron, as the sulphate or carbonate, seem to be attended with the best results. With the blood in this state, turnips are to be carefully avoided as being too watery and indigestible.

In conclusion, I may add I was unable to find the parasite described by Mr. Monro, nor can I suggest what it might have been.

I have, &c.

JOHN F. McCLEAN, M.R.C.V.S.,
Government Veterinarian.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

No. 2.

Mortality among Lambs in Hawera District.

SIR,—

Live Stock Department, Wellington, 4th April, 1891.

On this subject, which I was engaged investigating from the 3rd to the 14th February, I have very little further to add to my report of last year on a *post mortem* examination of two sheep sent to me to Wellington. I had no opportunity of making a *post mortem* examination of any sheep dying as a result of the disease, which I stated in my last report I believed to be Anæmia. I, however, examined and subsequently killed several that were visibly affected, and am confirmed in the opinion I expressed last year—namely, that these sheep are dying from Anæmia. The cause of this I look upon as being due to the food-supply being deficient in some of the necessary constituents of healthy blood, probably the carbonates of soda, tri-basic phosphates of lime and magnesia, and phosphate of iron. I found numbers of the *Tænia marginata* in their cystic forms (bladder worms), but these are not known to be the cause of any serious trouble among sheep. I have no further remedial measures to point out, except perhaps that, should this disease be persistent, it might be advisable for these farmers to turn their attention to fattening rather than breeding stock with the present heavy losses.

In conclusion, I would draw your attention to an article in the *New Zealand Farmer*, for March, with reference to the prevalence of disease in the Tauranga District. I have not been afforded an opportunity of personally investigating this complaint, but from private correspondence I have no hesitation in saying these two diseases appear to be identical.

I have, &c.,

JOHN F. McCLEAN, M.R.C.V.S.,
Government Veterinarian,

The Hon. the Minister of Lands,