

WELLINGTON—WEST COAST DISTRICT.

Horses have during this period been in good health generally, and there have been no further losses reported from pyæmia following upon strangles as occurred last year.

Cattle.—The health of cattle in the Wellington portion of this district has been good. In the more northern portion of the West Coast District there has, however, been a considerable mortality among young cattle. This has been reported by the Government Veterinarian to have been principally due to tuberculosis, brought on in his opinion by the unfair treatment this class of stock are subjected to.

Many settlers in this district are content to try and rear their young calves on separated milk, without the addition of any heat-producing material to take the place of the butter-fat extracted therefrom. This, together with the fact that only in very exceptional cases is any reasonable shelter afforded, would, in the Veterinarian's opinion, be liable to predispose young stock to a wasting disease such as tuberculosis.

Sheep.—Owing to the favourable season and fine winter the health of sheep generally has been good. There was a very unusual mortality among breeding-ewes in very many flocks in the Rangitikei and Wairarapa Districts. Strong and apparently healthy ewes were found to be dying quite suddenly in considerable numbers, and many persons who attempted to ascertain the cause of death from text-book descriptions of diseases were of opinion it was anthrax or Cumberland disease.

The cause of this mortality was reported on by the Veterinarian to have been due to degeneration of the liver, principally of a "fatty" character, caused in his opinion by excess of stimulating food with insufficient exercise. From this it would appear possible that a season so favourable to the growth of plant life as the last may, to a limited extent, be detrimental to the welfare of certain classes of stock.

No satisfactory cause has as yet been arrived at accounting for the mortality prevailing among what would appear to be the strongest and most thriving lambs, mentioned in my last annual report as occurring among many flocks in the South Wairarapa. In the season just past this mortality again occurred in the Wairarapa, and also unfortunately extended to a large number of flocks on the West Coast. Neither, as yet, has the cause of the urinary trouble prevailing among wethers, particularly in the Rangitikei County, been ascertained.

Here I cannot help expressing the regret I feel that settlers should endeavour to conceal from this department their losses among their stock, although they themselves have no idea of the causes of death. It is doubtless done on account of the idea prevailing that it would be to the detriment of their properties if such were known. There are, no doubt, large numbers of stock lost annually, wholly from preventable causes; and if the owners can be brought to see that it is really to their interest to communicate with this department, whose object is to conserve their interests, much good to the stock-raising industry will result.

There are at present indications of foot-rot—by this I mean, true contagious foot-rot, as distinct from foot-rot caused by overgrowth of horn structures—being very troublesome this coming winter. I trust, however, that settlers, by adopting the precautions pointed out to them in the pamphlet issued by this department, will be enabled to reduce their loss from this cause to a minimum.

Internal parasites have been a fruitful source of annoyance to careless stockowners; but until they recognise that in this case "prevention is better than cure," and work systematically on this principle, they must not expect to be free from this pest. The favourable season just over, together with ordinary care and attention, has reduced the number of lice-infested sheep very considerably.

Lambs and Wool.—There has, throughout the whole district, been an excellent lambing, and in consequence of the abundance of feed the wool clip appears to have been well up to the average.

I have, &c.,

Wellington, April, 1892.

JOHN DRUMMOND, Inspector.

MARLBOROUGH—NELSON DISTRICT.

Sheep.—Throughout the district the sheep remain free from scab. I have not seen the insect since September, 1889, nor have I heard of any suspicion of its being now in existence. A few flocks are slightly infected with lice, but to no serious extent, the sheep being dipped as soon as disease is discovered, or as soon as possible after shearing, many of the small sheepowners making it a rule now to dip their sheep every year. Lungworm is beginning to be more prevalent than formerly, and many owners have had to dose their hoggets with turpentine and oil. The pamphlet lately issued by the department will, I am informed, be of great service to many of the sheepowners. The clip in a few cases was light, but in most satisfactory. The lambing in all cases has I am informed been good. During the year there has been 13,017 frozen sheep exported, this being the second season, the first being in 1885, when the industry in the district commenced. The number is small compared to other districts, but it has been a boon to sheepowners, and, now that freezing works are being erected at Spring Creek, I have no doubt but the number will soon double. Hitherto the sheep have been frozen on a hulk lying at Picton. About 2,500 of the above were driven overland from Nelson District *via* Rai Valley to Picton.

Horses.—As no returns are made of horses I am unable to give the number in the district. No serious disease has shown itself, although last winter many were attacked with strangles, or a severe cold, which in many cases made the animals unfit for work for about a fortnight, after which they recovered.

Cattle.—No serious disease has shown itself, although a few head have been destroyed suffering from cancerous sores. The season being exceptionally fine and mild, there has been abundance of feed.

I have, &c.,

Nelson, 30th May, 1892.

T. G. RICHARDSON, Inspector.