

LIVE-STOCK DIVISION

REPORT OF W. C. BARRY, DIRECTOR

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Owing to the very dry summer in 1946, it was anticipated that the autumn and winter would prove a difficult period for stock, particularly in regard to the feed-supply. It was fortunate, however, that the winter turned out to be mild, and the drought-stricken areas recovered very well and provided some feed throughout the winter.

The climatic conditions in Otago and Southland were particularly favourable, and stock wintered better than they had done for some seasons.

The spring was cold and wet in all districts, and production was very backward compared with that of other years. Dairy production did not reach its usual peak, and the cold, wet conditions retarded fattening of lambs. The lamb-fattening season and other aspects of primary production were generally about a month later than in a normal season.

Improved weather conditions from December onward were reflected in the stock fattening better, with large drafts of lambs available for slaughter, and a general improvement in dairy production. The summer was satisfactory, if rather dry in some districts, but autumn rains have proved beneficial, and the autumn and winter prospects are now quite good.

A large quantity of hay has been saved in the South Island, and the North Island production of hay and silage is considered satisfactory for winter needs.

HEALTH OF LIVE-STOCK

HORSES

The health of horses has remained good during the year, although some small outbreaks of strangles took place.

There is practically no interest in the breeding of draught horses, and very few stallions have been examined under the Stallions Act. There appears to be an increasing interest in saddle-horses and in the breeding of children's ponies. The classes at the agricultural shows show increased entries in this field.

The breeding of thoroughbred horses is being actively pursued, and many good prices were obtained at the last sale of young stock.

CATTLE

Diseases scheduled under the Stock Act

Tuberculosis.—The number of cattle condemned under the Stock Act for tuberculosis during the year amounted to 6,397; 5,177 were condemned on clinical symptoms and 1,220 as reactors to the tuberculin test. In each case compensation was paid in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The tuberculin test was applied to 22,061 cattle, of which 1,220 reacted, giving a percentage of 5.5.

The total number of cattle, exclusive of calves, examined at the various abattoirs and meat-export slaughterhouses was 602,755, a decrease of 72,193 on last year's figures. Of these, 42,145, or 7.0 per cent., were found to be affected with tuberculosis in varying degree, a large percentage being only slightly affected. This indicates an increase of 0.7 per cent. infection among cattle slaughtered in these premises.

The testing of herds is mainly carried out on a voluntary basis, but during the year an amendment to the Stock Act requiring the testing of dairy herds supplying milk for town supply came into operation on the 1st May, but owing to various reasons a smaller number of herds has been tested than was visualized. Under the amendment to the Act a total of 9,305 cattle were subjected to the tuberculin test, when 524 reactors were found. This gives a percentage of 5.6, the majority of this testing being carried out in