

this improvement can be maintained and thereby make available for export a considerable amount of bobby veal that would otherwise be lost as an exportable commodity. The position is complicated by pools collecting many calves that are small and immature, and also by some collectors classifying as underweights at the farm gate large numbers of calves that are subsequently passed at the processing-works as suitable for export. This latter system has the effect of building up the average net return for all heavier-grade animals, and as a consequence producers are reluctant to hold the smaller calves longer than is absolutely necessary. In many cases it has been noted that the number of calves rejected at the processors as underweights is 50 per cent. less than the number collected and paid for by the pool as such.

The lack of suitable scales has been a handicap to many pools in carrying out the efficient weighing of calves at the farm gates, and with supplies still limited it is not practicable to introduce a fixed minimum live weight which would materially assist in having only the more mature calves forwarded for processing. It is estimated that an additional 800,000 lb. of bobby veal could be made available for export annually if the percentage of rejects was reduced to the 1939-40 level of 2 per cent. to 3 per cent., and every endeavour is being made by the Division to achieve this objective.

In an endeavour to eliminate delays which were proving detrimental to the condition in which calves were arriving at processing-points, a survey was carried out during the period under review of the time calves were in transit between the various pools and the processing-works. In very few cases does the geographical position of pools make it possible for calves to be processed the same day as they are collected, the majority having to be held over until the following day. In a few instances, calves were held for a longer period, but this has now been eliminated entirely, thus removing one of the most undesirable aspects of calf transportation. In some areas, however, it was found that, although calves were being processed the day following collection, they were travelling very long distances by rail, and prior to reaching their destination passed *en route* as many as three other processing-points. While these long rail journeys may not be considered desirable from the humane point of view, few alternatives appear available. By zoning the output of pools to the nearest processors, however, the position could, no doubt, be greatly improved, but the main disadvantage to such a system is that it would tend to limit pool authorities in their choice of marketing arrangements, which would, under present conditions, not be in the interests of the industry generally. It is therefore the policy of the Division to assist in having calves delivered to processors as expeditiously as possible, while at the same time leaving pool authorities with the widest reasonable choice of marketing arrangements.

The majority of pools held annual meetings during April and May, after a lapse of some years due to the exigencies of the war period, and a keen interest was taken by producers in pool affairs generally. The rotational retirement of committee members which was introduced by the 1946 regulations was well received and had a very stabilizing effect on the industry, with the result that many of the post-war problems were more readily overcome. Numerous suggestions have been received in regard to further amendments to the regulations, and these will be the subject of discussions with the representatives of the industry in the near future.

The saving of additional heifer calves has also received the attention of the Division, and the necessity for this drive has been emphasized at every opportunity. From general reports it is considered that a greater number of heifer calves were saved during the past season. Proposals for a more organized effort being undertaken next season will be the subject of discussions with the Calf Pool Executive in the near future.

The prospects for the present season are particularly bright following the raising of the stabilized price for skins, and the net return per calf will be considerably in advance of that obtaining for previous seasons.