

LIVE-STOCK DIVISION

REPORT OF W. C. BARRY, DIRECTOR

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

In most districts the autumn and winter seasons were mild and live-stock fared fairly well. In Auckland Province dairy herds came through the winter in good condition, resulting in record dairy production in the North Auckland district in the early spring.

An excellent lambing percentage was experienced by the sheep-farmers, and though a good season was expected the average weight of the lambs killed will probably be found to be lower than that of the previous year. Many works began killing operations a few weeks earlier this year with a view to avoiding congestion later. Though the very dry season in some areas retarded the fattening of lambs, it also reduced losses from parasitic disease.

The past summer will be recorded as one of the driest and warmest seasons for many years, and drought caused stockowners concern in many districts. The feed position on many farms became critical and supplementary feeding had to be provided. In several districts herds dried off early and some town-supply authorities found difficulty in maintaining a supply of milk for the population. The dry season also affected root crops adversely, and fattening crops such as rape were a failure. The prospect for the coming winter is not good. There will be no surplus of hay, and pastures are bare at present.

HEALTH OF LIVE-STOCK

HORSES

The health of horses has remained good during the year, no serious disease having been recorded.

There is little demand for horses, apart from hacks and general dairy-farm types, and little interest has been shown in the breeding of draught horses. At agricultural shows the entries in the hack and pony classes have been maintained, and pony clubs are being formed in many parts of the country.

CATTLE

Diseases scheduled under the Stock Act

Tuberculosis.—Cattle condemned under the Stock Act for tuberculosis during the year numbered 6,120, 5,164 being condemned on clinical symptoms and 956 as reactors to the tuberculin test. In each case compensation was paid in accordance with the provisions of the Stock Act. The tuberculin test was applied to 17,026 cattle, of which 956 reacted, giving a percentage of 5.6.

The total number of cattle, exclusive of calves, examined at abattoirs and meat-export slaughterhouses was 687,382, an increase of 84,627 on last year's figures. Of these, 42,205, or 6.1 per cent., were found to be affected with tuberculosis in varying degree, a large percentage being only slightly affected. This indicates a decrease of 0.9 per cent. infection among cattle slaughtered in these premises.

The testing of dairy herds providing milk for town supply is now required by law, but this work has been practically in abeyance during the year because of discussions about the basis of compensation to be paid to the dairy-farmers for reactor animals.