

Diseases of Pigs

Tuberculosis.—This disease is one of the chief causes of condemnation of pig-meat on inspection. The pig is very susceptible to any trace of infection which may be present in the milk products commonly used in the fattening of pigs in the intensive dairying districts.

Suipestifer Infection.—In the numerous specimens forwarded by the field staff for laboratory examination, the reports show that infection with the suipestifer organism is a common finding. This infection is responsible for quite large mortalities on certain properties.

Other Diseases.—No cases of mange in pigs have been recorded during the year. Neither has kidney-worm infestation been seen, and it is hoped that this parasite will not become established on pig-farms.

A type of lameness in pigs, described as foot-rot, is being investigated in the field and at the laboratory. Because the disease retards fattening of pigs, it is of considerable economic importance.

Swine Husbandry

Pig-meat Production.—For the first time for six years, pig-production figures show some evidence of recovery. Though the increased weight of pig-meat produced in the year ended 30th September, 1947, from fewer pigs might be ascribed largely to the better dairying-conditions experienced in that year as compared with the previous one, the tendency for the figures to increase has been carried through the season and the slaughtering to 31st March, on both numbers and tonnage basis, are higher than for the preceding twelve months. The increase is more than 40,000 by numbers and 3,000 tons of meat, or 6.6 per cent. by numbers and 8.1 per cent. by weight. This increase is the first real sign of recovery in the pig industry since the uncertain days of 1941-42.

A summary of the position as at 30th September for the past six years is as follows :—

Year.	Breeding-sows (as at 31st. January).	Total Pigs slaughtered.	Pigs per Sow.	Slaughtered as—			Total Weight of Pig-meat (as Car- casses).
				Porkers, 40-120 lb.	Baconers, 121-200 lb.	Choppers, over 200 lb.	
1942	91,338	925,982	10.1	494,126	397,717	34,139	47,987
1943	81,882	772,744	9.4	321,049	418,943	32,752	44,320
1944	77,300	740,913	9.6	254,126	464,558	22,229	43,251
1945	77,200	681,280	8.8	170,852	489,220	21,208	42,378
1946	72,000	664,275	9.0	256,821	385,782	21,672	38,437
1947	67,938	645,728	9.5	198,631	423,368	23,729	39,491

Breeding-sow numbers had dropped to 67,938 at 31st January, 1947, the lowest figure since 1931. The figure at January, 1948, is not yet available, but it is hoped that it will show some recovery. That breeding-stock has fallen to too low an ebb is clearly shown by the increasing number of heavy pigs being slaughtered. In the year ended September, 1946, 36 per cent. of all baconers slaughtered were over 160 lb., and this figure increased to 39 per cent. during the ensuing twelve months.

These heavyweight pigs tend to be overfat, and for the good name of New Zealand baconers on both the local and United Kingdom markets it is essential to aim at the slaughter of an increased number of pigs at more moderate weights.