

production. There is little doubt about poultry-producers responding to a call for increased production once it is possible to provide the additional food required to increase present flocks and establish new ones.

Poultry-producers also experienced considerable difficulties during the incubation and brooding season as the result of power cuts. The majority of commercial producers depend on electric power for operating their incubators and brooders. Very few have stand-by plants, as the cost of such equipment represents heavy capital expenditure. Power Boards co-operated to the full in the majority of districts in an endeavour to assist poultry-producers as far as circumstances permitted.

*Standard Mash.*—The standard-mash scheme, put into operation some eighteen months ago as a means of distributing equitably available supplies of meals suitable for poultry, has run more smoothly during the past year. Some 68,000 tons of mash were manufactured and distributed in 1947 and few poultry-producers were able to claim with justification that they were without mash at any time. The scheme has assisted materially during a most difficult period and the food-supply position has not improved sufficiently to warrant its discontinuance. It is still only too obvious that the poultry industry cannot return to normal and embark on a much-needed expansion plan until greater supplies of wheat, barley, and other valuable poultry-foods are available.

*Improvement of Stock.*—The New Zealand Poultry Flock Improvement Plan, started in 1945, is receiving continued support from poultry-producers. There are definite indications that poultry-producers who have supported the plan by having their breeding-flocks accredited are now able to see improvement in the quality of their stock. The comments of such producers are doing much to overcome any initial criticism and are assisting materially to establish the plan on a sound basis. The progress made to date is indicated by the fact that in 1945, 28 flocks were accredited; in 1946, 72 flocks; and in 1947, 101 flocks. The 1947 accredited flocks contained some 26,000 breeding-hens; those birds could account for 156,000 pullets from accredited breeders at the conservative estimate of six pullets to each breeding-hen during the normal breeding season. From the applications to date for accreditation in 1948 there is every indication that the figure of 101 flocks in 1947 will be passed by a substantial margin.

*Poultry-diseases.*—Though outbreaks of disease have been experienced in poultry flocks throughout the Dominion during the past year, there is no evidence to suggest that losses have been greater than in previous years. Despite severe difficulties with food-supplies and the quality of food available, there appears to be no reason to suspect that these difficulties have adversely affected the health of poultry flocks as a whole. Increased numbers of poultry-producers have availed themselves of the free service of blood-testing breeding-stock as a precaution against the incidence of pullorum disease in chicks. More than 140,000 birds were blood-tested in 1947. A full-time veterinary officer has been appointed to assist with disease control and to study disease problems of poultry. This will strengthen considerably the services now given by the Animal Research Station, Wallaceville, and the Poultry Instructors.

*The Poultry Demonstration Plant, Upper Hutt.*—The management programme of the plant has been dominated to a marked degree by the limited food available. It was not possible to expand the flock and so stock the housing available in the plant. The rearing of pullets was restricted to some 700 birds, whereas under normal conditions more than double this number will be required annually for replacements. No attempt was made to develop the table-bird section of the plant.

Progress was made in the preparation of housing intended for the establishment of breeders' laying trials, which are to be closely linked with the Poultry Flock Improvement Plan. The intention was to open these trials in March, 1948, but the outlook for supplies