

of wheat for poultry was so uncertain at the end of 1947 that it was decided to postpone these trials for at least a year. This decision was made reluctantly, as the poultry industry has shown considerable interest in the establishment of laying trials.

A start has been made with testing several strains of White Leghorns and Black Orpingtons as a first step in the proposed programme of pedigree breeding and progeny testing. Some 300 pullets were trap-nested for forty-eight weeks, the highest individual production being 279 eggs in forty-eight weeks by a Black Orpington pullet.

A number of poultry-producers and other interested persons visited the plant during the year, and a field-day was held in February, when more than sixty poultry-producers from the Wellington district, Blenheim, and Nelson inspected the plant and attended demonstrations associated with poultry-disease control.

WOOL

The Market for Wool.—When the final returns are available later in the year, it is certain that several records will have been broken during the 1947–48 wool season. It is too early to forecast the likely total wool-production, but there can be little doubt that the total value of wool sold at auction will be a record.

Experiments and Investigations.—Experiments on the use of D.D.T. as a sheep-dipping material have now been suspended because of the greater efficiency and cheapness of “Gammexane” for this purpose. Ample supplies of proprietary dips containing this material are now on the market. The Department has collaborated in the investigation of outbreaks of lameness in sheep after dipping with certain brands of “Gammexane” dips. It is certain that this weakness of the dip will soon be remedied by the makers, but there is no doubt that for efficiency in killing parasites and lasting power in the fleece “Gammexane” represents a great advance on any dipping-material previously used.

Work is still being done on the control of moths in wool-stores with “Gammexane” smoke generators. It has been found that, though their use will not entirely eliminate the moths, one or two applications during the breeding season will keep them down to a tolerable level.

Marking Preparations.—Manufacturers of wool-branding fluids, raddles, &c., are still submitting quite a number of new formulæ which they are seeking official approval to manufacture and sell. These substances are submitted to practical tests for scourability and during the past season only 26 of the 46 samples submitted were found to be satisfactory. Deleterious non-scourable wool-marking preparations are still causing trouble in the woollen-mills, and a time-lag will be inevitable before all stocks of wool containing the old non-approved brands have been used up. Wide publicity has been given to the fact that it is now an offence to use anything other than an approved wool-marking preparation, and farmers have been advised always to look for a label on the container showing that the material has been approved.

The Wool-clip.—The clip for 1947–48, in the main, has been less attractive than that of the previous year. That can be put down to the abnormally dry season in both Islands, extending from the autumn and into spring. The wool has reflected these conditions by being in most cases light in condition, dusty, and rather shorter in staple than usual.

South Island: The Canterbury clip seems to have suffered least of all from the dry season. Half-bred wool was well grown and light in condition with good colour, and the Merino wools were most attractive and commanded very good prices. Crossbreds were light in condition, but not quite as attractive as the finer wools. North Canterbury and Marlborough wools showed some burr, and west coast crossbreds were extremely light in condition, stained, and burry.