

LIVE-STOCK DIVISION

REPORT OF W. C. BARRY, DIRECTOR

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

The production season has been a very favourable one in all respects. Although parts of Wellington Province were affected with a drought in April, 1948, rain fell during the month, resulting in good grass growth, and this prevented some loss of stock and much loss of condition in dairy herds.

Fortunately the winter was mild, and stock losses, though serious for some owners, were not as heavy as expected. However, many animals had to be removed from the Taihape, Feilding, and Wanganui area to other districts where feed was more plentiful. At that time the outlook for the winter was not promising in the districts most seriously affected.

The flooding in the Gisborne district during May resulted in the loss of some thousands of sheep and other crop and pasture damage. The winter and spring were mild, and with an evenly-distributed rainfall a very good season has been experienced. Large amounts of hay and silage have been saved in all North Island districts and the winter prospects are quite good.

In the first quarter of the year in many parts of Canterbury April, May, and June were drier than usual. The weather was mild and hay and chaff were used extensively in the feeding of stock. A mild winter followed and in July pastures freshened remarkably. A fairly even rainfall month by month ensured a good season for the sheep-farmer. Lambs did very well, but some were sent to the works without being properly finished because of scarcity of feed.

Wool prices reached record levels at some sales and stock prices remained at a high level throughout the year.

The seasonal report from Otago was also a favourable one. Sheep had wintered well in one of the mildest winters on record. A very good lambing percentage followed, and the feed prospects were good. With the exception of North Otago, where conditions were dry, the rest of the province as well as Southland had a good rainfall and a good grass season.

Because of a very evenly-distributed rainfall the production season has been good for the sheep-farmer and the dairy-farmer. It is expected that an increase in the output of butter and cheese will be recorded. The health of live-stock has remained good in all districts.

HEALTH OF LIVE-STOCK

HORSES

No serious disease of horses has been recorded during the year. Steadily-increasing use of tractors has resulted in the breeding of farm horses falling away, and it is now difficult to purchase animals suitable for farm-work. There is continued interest in light horses and ponies and the breeding of thoroughbred horses.

CATTLE

Diseases Scheduled Under the Stock Act

The number of cattle condemned under the Stock Act during the year for tuberculosis amounted to 6,295; 5,477 were condemned on clinical symptoms and 769 as reactors to the tuberculin test, and an additional 49 positive tests were carried out by club veterinarians. In each case compensation was paid in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The tuberculin test was applied by Departmental veterinarians to 18,265 cattle, of which 769 reacted, giving a percentage of 4.2.