

Department of Agriculture, Head Office, Wellington, 23rd July, 1904.
The Hon. the Minister for Agriculture.

Spread of Black-leg.

I REGRET to say that this disease is now more or less prevalent in the district lying between the Wanganui and Mokau Rivers. An isolated case has also appeared in the Auckland District.

Mr. Gilruth, Chief Veterinarian, recommends that the first-named area should be quarantined, and that no cattle under eighteen months old should be allowed out of the area except in accordance with regulations.

The Auckland outbreak can be dealt with without quarantining.

JOHN D. RITCHIE, Secretary.

For Cabinet.—T.Y.D. 23/7/04.

In Cabinet, 24th July, 1904.

RECOMMENDATION approved. Matter to be referred to Stock Committee.

A. WILLIS.

Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Division, Pathological Laboratory,
Wellington, 15th July, 1904.

The Secretary.

I ATTACH copy of a memo. to Inspector Brittain *re* black-leg at Pukekohe East.

In reporting this matter, Inspector Brittain states,—

“Mr. Comrie informed me that this is the second calf he has lost under similar circumstances, and that some of his neighbours have lost several young animals in the same way. I have made further inquiries, and found Mr. Alfred Ballard had lost four—one about three weeks ago, another on the 21st ultimo, one the other day, and another has died since. Mr. H. King has, I hear, lost two, and Mr. Wilkin, of Drury, told me he had lost four; the whole of the symptoms being identical with those of Mr. Comrie's calf.”

J. A. GILRUTH.

Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Division, Pathological Laboratory,
Wellington, 15th July, 1904.

F. H. Brittain, Esq., Inspector of Stock, Auckland (through Mr. Clifton).

Re specimens from a calf belonging to Mr. James Comrie, of Pukekohe East, in which you suspected black-leg, as per your description in memo. of 2nd instant:—

Microscopical examination of smears showed bacilli suspicious of this disease, while experiments conducted with the contents of pipettes prove the nature of the disease in question to have been black-leg.

At the present time we cannot vaccinate the calves belonging to the different owners of the affected stock, owing to lack of material. Every care should be taken, however, to see that the carcasses are burned or buried, preferably the former.

I shall be glad if you will make full inquiries and ascertain when the disease got into the district, and how it probably arrived—that is to say, the inquiry should be conducted particularly on the lines of ascertaining whether it was brought by young stock from Taranaki, or by imported bones, or otherwise. I understand from Mr. Young, in Taranaki, that occasionally a number of young stock are taken up to the Waikato.

Herewith I send you a leaflet on black-leg which was issued last year, copies of which are, no doubt, to be had in the Auckland office.

J. A. GILRUTH, Chief Veterinarian.

The Secretary.—For your information.—J. A. GILRUTH, Chief Veterinarian.

BLACK-LEG OR BLACK-QUARTER, ITS NATURE AND PREVENTION.

By J. A. GILRUTH, M.R.C.V.S., Chief Veterinarian.

Black-leg having now been ascertained to be the cause of very serious losses among young cattle in the Taranaki District, this leaflet is issued for the information of cattle-owners.

The terms used to denote the diseases are various, the following being the more common: “Symptomatic anthrax,” “quarter-evil,” “quarter-ill,” “carbuncular fever,” “black-leg,” “black-quarter,” &c.

Cause.

Black-leg is due to the entrance of a special microbe or germ into the system through scratches or abrasions of the skin, or through the food. These germs form spores, which are very resistant to all the common antiseptic forces of Nature. They are all capable of living in the soil for numbers of years, and can be carried from place to place by various agencies. This disease was formerly confounded with anthrax, but it has been demonstrated that the germs of the two diseases are of totally different species.

Symptoms.

The most notable symptom is the development of a characteristic swelling underneath the skin of one or more quarters—usually a hind-quarter, though the swellings may appear on the neck, shoulder, breast, loins, flanks, or rump. The animal is dull, feverish, and suffers from loss of appetite. Over the swelling the skin is tense, and when the hand is passed over it a peculiar cracking noise is heard, due to the presence of gas. When cut into, a little frothy, blackish,