

APPENDIX.

LIVE-STOCK DIVISION.

REPORT OF C. J. REAKES, D.V.Sc., M.R.C.V.S., DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR.

Wellington, 20th June, 1917.

The Secretary of Agriculture, Industries, and Commerce.

FOLLOWING is a report on the work of the Live-stock Division during the past year.

C. J. REAKES, Director, Live-stock Division.

INTRODUCTION.

The duties assigned to this Division have been conducted largely upon routine lines, the depletion of the staff, owing to the number of its members being absent with the New Zealand Forces, preventing the undertaking of new investigations or additional measures of disease-control. Further, the undertaking of additional work of what may be termed an educational nature, both in connection with the breeding and care of stock as well as the prevention and control of disease, has had to be postponed, though the desirableness of it is apparent in some directions. It is hoped, however, that after the termination of the war new spheres of activity may be undertaken, and an endeavour made to increase the usefulness of the Division.

During the latter part of the year my own time has been principally occupied by special duties in connection with the requisitioning of wool, sheep-skins, and hides.

LIVE-STOCK.

The health of stock generally for the season was good, there being no outbreaks of disease of any serious nature, such trouble as occurred having been due principally to dietetic causes influenced by the climatic conditions prevailing in various districts.

The lambing was good generally. The estimated percentage of lambs reared from the number of ewes put to the ram was 85·8 per cent. for the North Island, and 80 per cent. for the South Island, representing a total of 10,733,579 lambs reared, or about 200,000 in excess of the previous year's estimate. In some districts affected by excessive rainfall there has been considerable difficulty in fattening lambs, and the ravages of internal parasites may be expected to cause some trouble during the coming winter.

Statistics collected during the year show that the apprehension expressed in a former report as to a possible shortage of cattle is minimized. The number of cattle recorded in the Dominion in January, 1916, was 2,329,292, being an increase of 309,121 on the figures shown when the statistics were last collected in 1911.

The number of cattle, exclusive of calves, slaughtered for export during the last four years is as follows :—

Year ended 31st March—	Bullocks and Heifers.	Cows.	Bulls.	Total.
1914	63,378	36,364	9,937	109,679
1915	112,414	58,247	11,459	182,120
1916	104,497	94,314	12,520	211,331
1917	127,446	103,877	11,953	243,796

ANIMAL-DISEASES.

Horses.

The past year has been remarkable for the small amount of diseases reported. Strangles has been unusually quiescent, whilst ringworm has almost disappeared.

Stringhalt.—This trouble, referred to in my last annual report as being under investigation, suddenly disappeared, and comparatively few fresh cases have been reported. The disease is undoubtedly that termed "Australian stringhalt," and the careful observations made, together with the experimental work carried out, all clearly indicate that it is not in any degree contagious, but is apparently of dietetic origin, though the causative agent remains undetermined. Except in those acute cases where death occurred soon after the onset of the trouble, recovery came about spontaneously after the lapse of some months, the animals being apparently little or none the worse for their experience.

Cattle.

Contagious Abortion.—Research work in all parts of the world has thrown some new light upon this insidious disease, though there is yet much more to be learned. The methods of treatment recommended by the Department are still the best known, though there are indications that a form of treatment by a vaccine may be elaborated to the extent of proving of value. At present the best that can be said for this treatment is that it appears to be useful as a preventive when applied to empty cows sometimes before service. The best available up-to-date information has