

In cases where sheep exposed for sale have been found by the Inspectors of Stock to be affected with lice they have been ordered to be dipped, and prosecutions have been instituted against the owners.

THE POULTRY INDUSTRY.

The poultry industry has made a marked recovery from the set-back it received in 1915, caused by a sudden advance in the prices of fowl-feed without a corresponding increase in the price of eggs and poultry, which resulted in excessive culling and consequently decreased production. With short supplies of eggs and poultry and an increased demand prices for these products advanced considerably, while on the other hand prices of feed are slightly reduced. The industry may therefore now be again regarded as profitable to those concerned.

Recognizing the shortage of wheat for fowl-feed, a series of feeding tests were initiated at the Department's poultry-station at Milton by utilizing lucerne-chaff, finely cut or ground into meal, in conjunction with bran, oats, and maize. This industry was found to be in every respect satisfactory. Full particulars of these tests have been published in the Department's *Journal* (May and June, 1916, and June, 1917).

The sales of poultry and eggs for breeding purposes from the Department's two poultry-stations were as follows: Milton, 1,333 settings, 628 birds; Ruakura, 1,488 settings, 418 birds.

In order to demonstrate the possibilities in fattening or properly priming off ordinary store poultry, a number of cockerels were purchased under competition at one of the weekly auctions at Christchurch. These were taken to the Department's reserve at Quail Island, where they were fattened. After twenty to thirty-one days' feeding the birds were again offered for sale at the auction mart, and returned, after deducting cost of feeding, a profit of 92 per cent. over purchase price. (See *Journal* for July, 1916.) The results are a striking illustration of the value of priming poultry before marketing, and also of the money lost to the poultry-keepers of this country by failure to treat their birds for market in a proper manner. Further tests are to be carried out in this direction.

The Poultry Instructors have done good work, and their assistance and advice is appreciated and put to practical use by poultry-keepers. Their services have also been largely availed of all over New Zealand as judges at poultry shows.

PURCHASE OF HORSES FOR THE NEW ZEALAND FORCES.

Further supplies of horses for use with the Expeditionary Force and in camp were purchased during the year, the animals obtained being of good stamp and well fitted for the work required of them. That there was, and still is, an ample supply of horses in the Dominion is shown by the fact that not only were the last purchases obtained at no advance in price, but they were of continued good quality, the last shipment sent being quite the best from this point of view.

The total number of horses purchased up to date is 9,347. The average price paid was £22 ls. for artillery and £17 ls. 10d. for mounted infantry horses. Government Veterinary Officers took some part in these purchases, but the greater portion of the work was done by Inspectors of Stock, and the thorough and efficient manner in which this duty was performed is much appreciated.

MEAT-SUPPLIES FOR THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

The arrangement under which all meat available for export was taken over on behalf of the Imperial Government was continued during the year. In view of altered conditions, a new schedule of prices was agreed upon, these being as follows:—

	Per lb.
Wethers, first quality, 72 lb. and under	5 ³ / ₈ d.
„ „ over 72 lb. and up to 85 lb.	5 ¹ / ₈ d.
„ „ over 85 lb. and up to 98 lb. (subject to special approval by the Inspector)	4 ⁷ / ₈ d.
„ second quality	5 ¹ / ₈ d.
Ewes, first quality, 72 lb. and under	4 ⁷ / ₈ d.
„ „ over 72 lb. and up to 85 lb.	4 ³ / ₈ d.
„ second quality	4 ⁶ / ₈ d.
Lamb, specially prime and Canterbury quality, 42 lb. and under	6 ³ / ₈ d.
„ first quality, 42 lb. and under	6 ³ / ₈ d.
„ „ over 42 lb.	6 ³ / ₈ d.
„ second quality	6 ¹ / ₈ d.
Beef, prime ox	5d.
„ second and heifer	4 ³ / ₈ d.
„ boning in quarters	4 ¹ / ₈ d.
„ cow, prime	4 ³ / ₈ d.
„ „ second	4 ¹ / ₈ d.
„ boneless	5 ¹ / ₈ d.
Mutton, legs	6 ³ / ₈ d.
„ shoulders	5 ³ / ₈ d.
„ loins	5 ³ / ₈ d.

In connection with this requisition those officers of the Division engaged in meat-inspection at freezing-companies' establishments had a large share in carrying on the necessary work, they not only maintaining supervision over the grading at each works, but also checking and certifying to the various shipments invoiced to the Imperial Government. Considering the variety of duties now entrusted to these officers, and the strenuous nature of their work during the busier months of the year, they carried out their responsibilities efficiently, thus contributing in no small degree to the general success of this portion of the responsibilities accepted by the Government in connection with the war.