

breeding generally in this district is not carried out on progressive lines. This is most noticeable in the case of hacks and harness horses. Draught and milk-cart horses are again in good demand at high prices. Good hacks and harness horses are also scarce and prices high. Weedy sorts are fairly plentiful and almost unsaleable. The condition and health of cattle are satisfactory generally and good prices have been maintained, good dairy cows reaching a record price. Throughout the dairying districts a very large percentage of this season's calves have been slaughtered, which will no doubt show its effect on the young-stock markets later on.

Christchurch District. In a considerable portion of this district cattle were in rather low condition at the end of last winter. Those on the West Coast and from Ashburton northwards were in poor condition—in some instances very poor; while those south of Ashburton were in fair condition. This poor condition was specially noticed in regard to dairy cows in two inspection districts, and consequently in these two places the percentage of deaths among cows at and after calving, on account of their low condition, was higher than usual. With this exception the general health and condition of cattle have been good. The estimated percentage of deaths among dairy cattle from all causes during the year varies in different Inspectors' districts from 2 per cent. to 5 per cent. The estimated percentage of calves kept varies from 12 to 90. The percentage of mortality among calves under one year old varies from 4 to 10, the principal causes being parasitic gastritis, improper feeding, and want of shelter. The calves are fed chiefly on skim-milk and whey, while in some cases a little proprietary or other food is added. Several of the Inspectors estimate that the depreciation in value owing to insufficient care and improper feeding under one year old is very large—up to as high as 33 per cent. In a few localities more interest has been taken in the breeding of horses than during the previous three years; but on the whole horse-breeding could not be said to be progressive. There is a great demand now for draught and half-draught horses, and good prices are being paid for them—up to £50 and £60 for ordinary geldings. At one sale in the Lincoln district a two-year-old draught entire colt was sold for 1,000 guineas, which is said to be the Australasian record for a colonial-bred two-year-old colt. The increased demand and prices for horses should have a stimulating effect upon breeding operations. In the majority of instances winter feed, such as roots, hay, straw, lucerne, &c., is provided; but in some cases, especially on the West Coast, very little provision for winter feed is made.

Otago-Southland District.—The season proved to be a rather dry one, particularly in South Otago and Southland, but the condition of stock in general has been good and very little mortality has been reported. At Tuatapere only one special case of malnutrition has been reported. This was in a portion of hush country on the bank of the Waiau River. In the first year after burning and sowing, stock did very well, but in the second year there was a considerable loss, the prominent symptoms being emaciation and in a large number of cases diarrhoea. Treatment was applied with beneficial results, and some of the stock removed to other pastures immediately improved. There was a tendency on the part of the settlers to overstock, and, being a wet season, the forage did not seem to be sufficiently nutritious. During the past season, which has been fairly dry, stock have done very well. Two owners recently sold a line of fat cattle, while the third is milking thirty-five cows and rearing twelve calves, each on an allotment of 130 acres, and, considering the large area covered by stumps and fallen trees, conditions generally are improved and prospects more favourable. The past year has been singularly free from disease among sheep. The season has been good and fairly dry, and several diseases due to excessive feeding and want of exercise have been marked by their absence.

ANIMAL DISEASES.

Blackleg.—The regulations under the Stock Act designed to control the spread of this disease have been administered as heretofore in the areas defined, with quite satisfactory results. No alteration has been necessary in the boundaries of the Taranaki District area, but it will be necessary to review and slightly modify the boundaries of the areas defined in the Auckland District, and this is having attention. The number of calves inoculated had shown a steady decrease in the past few years, owing to the practice of killing the majority of the calves at birth, and it is somewhat satisfactory to notice that the former heavy decreases shown are not so marked this year. The figures of calves inoculated during the last three years ended 31st March are as follows:—

					1918.	1919.	1920.
Auckland	..	..	..	..	106,614	98,881	98,500
Taranaki	..	..	..	..	73,620	53,024	45,667

The vaccine used was all prepared at the Department's Veterinary Laboratory, and the results were entirely satisfactory.

Contagious Mammitis.—This disease continues to give trouble in dairying districts, but would appear to have been less in evidence in the Auckland dairying districts than heretofore. The loss occasioned by its appearance must still, however, be considerable, and every precaution possible to avoid its occurrence requires to be undertaken. Good work has been done by Veterinary officers and Inspectors of Stock by lectures and advice to owners, and a large number of samples of milk are examined at the Veterinary Laboratory to determine the presence or otherwise of the specific organism.

Contagious Abortion.—The position regarding this disease remains much the same, and it is not reported to be more in evidence in any of the districts with the exception of Wellington, where cases are more or less frequently reported. The disease is, however, more amenable to treatment than contagious mammitis, and where the treatment recommended by the Department is carefully followed good results are obtained. Nevertheless the loss must still be great, and more care should be exercised by farmers when introducing new animals to their herds to see that they are isolated and preventive measures taken before allowing them with the existing herd.

Vaginal Catarrh.—A number of cases which on investigation were found to be suffering from vaginal catarrh have been reported, and it is more than probable that a number of the cases of cows constantly returning to the bull are attributable to this trouble.