

However, much may be done in the latter case by occasional dippings, and also in destroying all roughage on the farm. In area B the position is better than it has been for several years. Very few fresh farms were infested, and in the majority of farms where ticks were found on stock in previous years none was found. The position at Waitara has improved; only a few ticks were found this season, and those all on properties previously affected. A constant inspection of all cattle within the area has been maintained, and all cattle within the area have been dipped or sprayed before removal. It is to be regretted that during the season a further development took place regarding cattle-tick in Poverty Bay. Ticks were reported on several properties in an area adjacent to Tolaga Bay. Every endeavour was made to locate and eradicate the parasites in this district. Regular inspection of all neighbouring stock was carried out, and spraying and burning of cover were resorted to, and it is to be hoped that by these means the ticks will be eradicated.

“ BUSH SICKNESS,” OR SOIL-DEFICIENCY.

That a considerable improvement has been effected on many of the farms within the bush-sick area is apparent to any one familiar with the district during the past decade. On many of the farms dairying is being carried on with reasonable hope of ultimate success, where a few years ago it was impossible to carry stock of any description successfully. A good example of this is to be seen in our own experimental farm at Mamaku. During the past few seasons dairying has been carried on with increasing success. Out of a herd of some twenty-odd cows milked during the past season the returns were good, and the animals maintained their health throughout the season. In fact, their yield and condition were in excess of that hoped for by those knowing the district a few years ago. The altered conditions have been brought about simply by better farming methods—viz., laying down good pastures, suitable top-dressing, frequent changes, and growing roots and hay for winter feed. Notwithstanding the knowledge we have acquired, this is a difficult country for the average settler to bring into a satisfactory state of cultivation. The success of the venture depends to a great extent on the amount of capital at his disposal. A larger amount is required than for outside country, and the average settler going on the land has not the necessary finance. The result is a continued struggle, with the not infrequent result in the past that the settler has had to abandon his land.

The value of citrate of ammonia and iron as a curative agent in this trouble has been demonstrated during the past season. Large quantities have been sold at cost price, and there is still a high demand for it by settlers in the affected areas.

LIVE-STOCK STATISTICS.

Sheep.—A further increase has again to be recorded in the number of sheep as shown by the returns collected on the 30th April, 1926. The increase shown is 357,038, and it is also satisfactory to note that the number of breeding-ewes shows an increase of 233,029. As was mentioned last year, the increase in the number of breeding-ewes is a reflection of the rapidly changing condition in regard to our mutton and lamb export industry. The number of lambs slaughtered at freezing establishments for the year under review reached a total of 5,343,766, an increase of 288,521 on the previous year. The number of sheep as at the 30th April, 1926, is shown in the table hereunder, together with those for the previous four years :—

Year.	Stud and Flock Rams (Two-tooth and over).	Breeding-ewes.	Other Sheep.	Lambs.	Total.
1922	322,072	12,496,054	3,687,672	5,716,461	22,222,259
1923	330,055	13,063,003	3,369,559	6,318,822	23,081,439
1924	332,814	13,076,097	3,853,482	6,513,386	23,775,776
1925	355,579	13,715,223	3,947,429	6,529,724	24,547,955
1926	370,535	13,948,252	4,292,056	6,294,036	24,904,993

Cattle.—A decrease in the total number of cattle is again recorded, and, contrary to previous years, the number of dairy cows shows a slight decrease. The following table shows the position under the respective classes, together with the previous four years :—

Year.	Bulls.	Dairy Cows.	Other Cattle.	Total.
1922	59,086	1,137,055	2,127,082	3,323,223
1923	60,154	1,248,643	2,171,897	3,480,694
1924	58,934	1,312,589	2,192,074	3,563,497
1925	59,820	1,323,432	2,120,492	3,503,744
1926	58,853	1,303,836	2,089,777	3,452,486

Swine.—An increase of 32,409 in swine has taken place, the total number as at January, 1926, being 472,534.

Horses.—Horses again show a decrease, the 1926 figures being 314,867, a decrease of 11,963.