

excellently in the open during the summer months. Such animals, however, are born in midwinter or early spring, and it is then that they require most attention if the best is to be got out of them. It is well known that the better an animal is fed and cared for during early life the sooner it will reach maturity, and if through any cause a check is received it may take weeks for the animal to recover, during which period it is being fed at a loss. It is essential, therefore, that every farmer should keep his pigs going well from the time they are dropped. To do this, however, good housing-accommodation (a liberal supply of bedding is required so that the young animals may be kept warm) must be provided for the farrowing sows, and when reared the young animals must still be housed and given suitable food until such time as weather conditions allow them to be turned into the open. Skim-milk when fed alone is not a balanced ration; too much of this material is required to bring a pig to maturity. With the addition of concentrates the milk required for one animal could be made to feed two, thus showing a handsome profit for the extra food consumed. When pigs are reared in large numbers in a given space a certain amount of disease is difficult to avoid, but given good conditions for feeding and housing the mortality amongst pigs would be nothing like it is at present. Improved conditions mean increased profits, an object which should be held steadily in view. Pigs should be looked upon as a valuable asset whereby our by-products can be turned into a handsome profit, not as a medium for getting rid of such products. If this is kept steadily in view it will be a step in the right direction.

During the year a considerable amount of pneumonia was seen, more particularly in the North Island. The mortality has been heavy, and when one takes into consideration the individual losses it would amount to a considerable sum in the aggregate. When once an animal has contracted the disease it seldom does any good, and in most instances had better be destroyed. This trouble is caused by the conditions under which the pigs are kept. As stated previously, if proper shelter and food were provided the number of outbreaks would be negligible. When the advice of Departmental officers is sought they are often at a disadvantage, as there are no means on the farms for providing the necessary materials for treatment—neither food nor shelter. Improvement is urgently needed in the management and feeding of our pigs.

A number of cases of paralysis were seen in the various dairying districts, and from experiments carried out at the Wallaceville Laboratory it would seem that the feeding of the animals was at fault. Animals that were fed with a moderate quantity of cod-liver oil in their feed made a good recovery. Probably there were other ingredients lacking. Further experiments will be carried out along this line.

Instruction in the direction of bringing about improved conditions of housing, management, feeding, &c., with a view to the further development of the pig-export industry, has been given during the year by the Instructor in Swine Husbandry (Mr. K. W. Gorringe). The development of this industry has, however, been somewhat affected by the fact that the price offering for frozen pork in London has not afforded sufficient inducement to producers to largely increase their output, and the immediate prospects do not encourage other than slow but steady progress along safe lines, in order that a footing may be obtained and a demand created.

During the latter part of the year a number of stud animals of the Large White, Berkshire, and Tamworth breeds were imported from Canada, and these importations should have a good effect on our pigs in the future.

In order to assist in the development of the export trade the Government decided to render some financial assistance, which ultimately took the form of a payment of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound in reduction of the freight charges to London. This is now in operation. The number of pigs recorded as slaughtered at registered establishments during the year was 498,022, being 56,563 in excess of the previous year. The exports during the same period showed an increased value of £69,524 compared with the same period last year.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY BRANCH.

In order that the present-day needs of the farmer, particularly the small farmer, in respect to the feeding, breeding, and general management of his stock might be met, an Animal Husbandry Branch of the Division was set up during the year, with Mr. J. McLinden, M.R.C.V.S., N.D.A., as officer in charge. This is a work of the greatest importance to many of the farmers of to-day, who are at a disadvantage in not having the experience of lifelong connection with live-stock management, which was so large a factor in the success of our farmers of the past. The development of this Branch has received a temporary check by the appointment of Mr. McLinden to the staff of the Massey College, but it is proposed to go ahead with this new work and have an organization capable of meeting the needs of the time.

LIVE-STOCK STATISTICS.

Sheep.—The returns of sheep held in the Dominion as at the 30th April, 1927, showed the flocks to have increased by 744,023. The number of wethers and dry ewes held at that date shows an actual decrease, but the number of breeding-ewes shows an increase of 883,478, the number representing 57·8 per cent. of the total flocks, which is the highest figure yet reached in the history of the sheep industry in New Zealand. The number of lambs slaughtered at freezing establishments for the year under review reached 5,776,321, an increase of 432,555. These figures do not represent the slaughtering for a complete season, as the period covered embraces a part of two seasons, but it closely coincides with the taking of the sheep returns, and in that respect the comparison is of value.