

reductase test. In addition to this, he must see that the milk is derived from healthy animals to avoid the risk of infection. With this end in view, all sheds, utensils, &c., are periodically examined, and with the assistance of our veterinary officers the herds are all clinically examined for disease, special attention being paid to the udder. Any suspicious animal is set aside, and a further test applied by means of the tuberculin test. Composite samples of milk are also taken and sent to the Veterinary Laboratory for examination for the presence of tubercle bacilli, and it is satisfactory to record that out of 295 samples examined during the year none were found to contain the bacilli.

IMPORTATION OF ANIMAL-MANURES.

It is now nearly twenty-five years since the importation of animal-manures into New Zealand was prohibited from all countries, with the exception of Australia and India, which were the chief sources of supply of animal-manures, and in which countries this Department inaugurated a system of licensing and inspection of the sterilization of animal-manures intended for shipment to New Zealand, with a view to prevent the introduction of such diseases as blackleg and anthrax through the medium of such manures. This system has stood to the present, but for some years past the demand for animal-manures from abroad has decreased to the vanishing-point, with the result that the inspection has been carried on at a loss. As a result of this position it has been arranged to withdraw the inspection from Australia, while the position in regard to Calcutta, where the cost is also considerable, required to be given consideration in the same direction.

POULTRY INDUSTRY.

This industry is showing signs of greater confidence and stability than for some years past, and, having now reached the stage when it is producing in excess of local requirements, the matter of setting up a regular export trade is one requiring very careful organization with a view to establishing a sound connection for the future, and at the same time not interfere with the local market. A market is available in London during the months of October to December, and, as the months of September to November are our heaviest producing months, the London market is the one offering the greatest prospects, and should be developed. There should be no fear on the part of local consumers that export will mean dearer eggs, as to bring about export there must be increased production, and, seeing that an export market is only available for a few months, more eggs will be available throughout the remainder of the year.

The poultry-breeding and experimental station at Wallaceville is now sufficiently established to enter fully into the objects for which it was established, and already a keen demand has set in for birds and sittings of eggs.

I append the report of the Chief Poultry Instructor, Mr. F. C. Brown, as follows :—

During the past year the poultry industry has made satisfactory progress as compared with the previous period. Food-prices have ruled on the high side, but fortunately for the producer the average return for fresh eggs for the greater part of the year has been on a satisfactory basis. In Wellington the average price paid to the producer for the year was in the region of 2s. per dozen. The worst feature in connection with the industry is the lack of organization among producers. There is a genuine desire, and effort, being made on the part of many producers to bring about organization, whereby poultry-products would be centralized on the main marketing centres, in order that all unnecessary costs might be eliminated between the producer and consumer. At present the marketing of poultry-products is chiefly controlled by merchants. Even some of the largest producers, with big monetary interests at stake, fail to realize the necessity for joint action in catering for the export trade.

A matter calling for serious consideration for the welfare of the industry is legislation to prevent the adulteration which takes place in regard to certain poultry-foods on the market. Some of the ground food-materials sold to poultry-keepers are not by any means what they are represented to be. Particularly does this effect the small poultry-keeper, who usually has not the necessary machinery to grind his own grain.

The egg-laying competitions, which are assisted in many ways by the Department, are rendering the industry excellent service in developing the laying-power of certain breeds of poultry. Much is also being done towards the maintenance of breed type. Furthermore, the weight of the eggs laid by the respective birds is taken into account. At one time the number of eggs laid was the only consideration; but now a bird is not only required to lay a given number of eggs, but in addition these must be of good size and quality for the chief honours to be secured.

The poultry-breeding and experimental station at Wallaceville is now fully stocked. It is expected that in the near future uniform types of the breeds kept will be available in order that experiments may be conducted relative to feeding, &c., which will disclose conclusive results. During the forthcoming breeding season it is proposed to conduct some research work relative to artificial incubation and breeding, with a view to ascertaining the probable cause of poor hatches, also mortality during the brooder stage. The station is laid out on up-to-date lines. The great objective aimed at is the maintenance of constitutional vigor in the stock and economy in labour in attending to the birds. Obviously, a plant of this description will prove of educational value to those poultry-keepers who visit it, whilst, best of all, it has acted and will in the future act as a means of increasing the knowledge of the Poultry Instructors, which in turn can be passed on to producers.

As regards the future development of the industry, this will largely depend on the available food-supply, its cost, and whether or not a better system of organization is brought about among producers than that which exists to-day. During the year the Poultry Instructors have had their time fully occupied in complying with the many requests for their services.

THE WALLACEVILLE VETERINARY LABORATORY.

It is pleasing to report that the work of this Laboratory is still on the increase. From this it must be assumed that the work carried out there is becoming of greater service to the farming community. Each season of the year brings its own disease, and in many instances the period at the disposal of the staff for investigating the trouble is limited, and for want of further material it frequently happens that the work has to cease for the time being. This, of necessity, prolongs the investigation.