

LIVE-STOCK DIVISION.

REPORT OF J. LYONS, M.R.C.V.S., DIRECTOR.

GENERAL CONDITIONS.

The past season has been a disappointing one for farmers in several districts throughout the Dominion. After a fairly mild winter a cold dry spring set in, which retarded the growth of young grass, while during the summer, drought conditions worse than have been experienced for many years, prevailed in a number of districts, especially in Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa, South Canterbury, and North Otago.

HEALTH OF LIVE-STOCK.

HORSES.

General health and condition among horses have been good, and there have been no ailments amongst them calling for special mention. The breeding of horses throughout the Dominion, with the exception of thoroughbreds, can be said to be at a standstill. There is still a limited demand for draught horses of the right type, and it is to be regretted that more of this type are not being bred, especially as just recently inquiries have been made from Australia for sires of the heavy type, and a number of Clydesdales have been exported to that country.

CATTLE.

Tuberculosis.—The total of cattle condemned in the field as the result of clinical examination and the tuberculin test amounted to 5,831. The total number of cattle examined at the various abattoirs and meat-export slaughterhouses was 266,848, an increase of 7,008 over last year's figures. Of these, 15,493, or 5·8 per cent. were found affected in varying degrees, a large percentage being only slightly affected. The total number of swine subjected to examination was 438,101. Of this number, 48,621, or 11·09 per cent., was found affected with tuberculosis, the great majority showing only slight lesions.

Actinomycosis.—The animals condemned for actinomycosis for which compensation was paid was 639, a decrease of 21 over last year's figures. Only advanced dangerous cases with open lesions were condemned and slaughtered, others met with being placed under treatment.

Malignant Growths.—The number of animals condemned for which compensation was paid was 423, a decrease of 35 from last year's figures.

Mammitis.—Reports from all districts show that there are still too many cases of this complaint in evidence, and consequently many cows have necessarily to be culled on account of faulty udders at the end of each milking season. As scientific workers here and elsewhere have not been able to further our knowledge with regard to this disease, and also seeing that any preventive or curative treatment applied so far has not given entire satisfaction, it was considered that with more accurate diagnosis of the disease in its earlier stages, more care in milking and the handling of the machines, and better sanitation generally, the disease could in a great measure be prevented. With this end in view measures were inaugurated by the officers of the Veterinary Laboratory, Wallaceville, whereby the milk of each cow in herds was examined microscopically, and in accordance with the results shown the herd was divided into three groups and milked accordingly. At monthly periods the milk from all cows was again examined so that it could be noted how individual cows were progressing. At the commencement of the milking season a number of dairy-farmers in various parts of the Dominion agreed to have the milk from their cows examined, and carry out their milking arrangements under this system. Unfortunately, a considerable number of those who entered into the arrangement were unable or unwilling to carry it through. It was their opinion that the grouping of the cows and milking them in rotation within such groups involved labour that could not be afforded, and also knocked the herd about to some extent. However, a number conscientiously carried out the arrangement, and some of these speak highly of it. They are well satisfied with the results obtained and intend to carry it further. It is yet too early to give a definite opinion in this matter, and further trials will have to be made before doing so. From the experience gained so far I feel assured that it is well worthy of a wider trial, and I trust that many more of our dairy-farmers will see their way clear to milk their herds under the arrangements made.

Contagious Abortion.—Although this disease is still in evidence in all districts where dairying is carried on, it has ceased to be the menace it once was. While anything from 1 to 3 per cent. of abortions can still be seen on a number of farms, it is only on a very rare occasion that the disease is noticed to the extent which prevailed formerly, when one could see anything from 30 to 50 per cent. of the herd abort. This is no doubt due to the fact, as the District Superintendent, Dunedin, remarks, that as a result of dissemination a high degree of immunity has resulted. In parts of the North Island the disease was fairly prevalent, more particularly in heifers carrying their first calf, and the disease was quite possibly contracted from paddocks where aborted cows had been depastured. If dairy-farmers would pay more attention to the segregation of their affected animals less would be heard of the disease among animals carrying their first calf. With reference to the prevention of abortion by segregation, I would refer to my remarks on the subject in the last annual report.