

LIVE-STOCK DIVISION.

REPORT OF W. C. BARRY, M.R.C.V.S., DIRECTOR.

The functions of the Live-stock Division cover a varied and extensive field. Primarily the Division is concerned with the protection and maintenance of the animal health of the Dominion. This is established through the agency of its field staff, which, in addition to the administration of the Stock Act, performs a supervisory control by means of which the occurrence of any unusual disease of live-stock can be readily determined. Research and investigation into animal disease is conducted by the staff of the Wallaceville Veterinary Laboratory working in collaboration with the field veterinarians. Advisory and instructional service to the farmer is maintained on all aspects of control and prevention of disease amongst stock, including animal husbandry instruction in its relationship to the hygiene, feeding, and management of live-stock. Quarantine and inspection of imported stock, together with the administration of those regulations having a bearing on the introduction of animal disease, is an important item in maintaining our live-stock free from the more serious animal diseases present in overseas countries.

In the administration of the Slaughtering and Inspection Act the Live-stock Division carries out the important duty of inspection and certification for export of all meat and animal by-products.

From the public health aspect, the Division controls the inspection of meat slaughtered for consumption in the Dominion, and also performs the very important work of dairy inspection in relation to the public milk-supply.

Amongst the activities of the Live-stock Division is included the administration of the Noxious Weeds Act and Rabbit Nuisance Act.

HEALTH OF LIVE-STOCK.

HORSES.

In so far as contagious disease is concerned, a continuance of freedom from such has again to be recorded in our horse population, a rather enviable position which the Dominion consistently maintains. With the exception of the occurrence of some cases of strangles, no contagious diseases of horses were reported.

With regard to the breeding of horses, it is pleasing to report that the increased activity in the direction of breeding of draught horses, commented upon last year, continues, and has developed even to a greater extent during the past year. High prices have been realized for good types of draught horses, and consequently breeding would appear to be sound economically. The breeding of Clydesdale horses has always occupied a very high position in New Zealand, and in this connection the introduction of legislation by which the soundness of Clydesdale stallions is ensured by compulsory veterinary examination, as is done in other countries, is well worthy of serious consideration.

Of the lighter class of horses, the hack and hunter types would appear to be engaging somewhat more attention than of recent years. Also the presence of riding schools in some centres is an indication of a tendency towards a return to horse-riding exercise. The breeding of horses suitable for remount purposes is, however, much neglected.

CATTLE.

Tuberculosis.—In the administration of the Stock Act 6,527 cattle were condemned during the year as a result of clinical examination and the application of the tuberculin test, compensation being paid in accordance with the Act. In the administration of the Slaughtering and Inspection Act 478,963 cattle (exclusive of calves) were examined at the various abattoirs and meat-export slaughterhouses. Of these, 31,244, or 6.52 per cent., were found to be affected with tuberculosis in varying degrees. This indicates an increase of 0.98 per cent. infection amongst cattle slaughtered in those premises. During the year the tuberculin test was applied to 14,423 cattle, of which number 1,141 reacted (7.9 per cent.).

Actinomycosis.—The number of animals condemned for this disease and for which compensation was paid totalled 828.

Malignant Growths.—The number of animals condemned and for which compensation was paid was 353.

Blackleg.—The incidence of this disease remained at a satisfactory level during the year. In the Whangarei district an increased number of outbreaks was recorded. The total number of calves vaccinated in the blackleg areas of Taranaki and Auckland during the year was 20,491. An amendment to the Blackleg Regulations, extending the period of time allowed for the removal of calves from the area after inoculation, was made during the year, this period being extended to ninety days.

Anthrax.—The Dominion continues to remain free from this disease.

Johne's Disease.—Further evidence of the increase of this disease came to light during the year in Taranaki and the Waikato, and it can be surmised that the infection exists on many other farms which, on account of the owners not suspecting the nature of the condition, remain unreported to the Department. Johne's disease can be briefly described as a chronic bacterial enteritis of cattle, due to the entrance of a specific germ known as Johne's bacillus. The characteristic symptoms produced are chronic and severe scouring, accompanied by progressive emaciation, until the animal is reduced to the condition of a "piner" or "waster." The germ is taken into the animal's system in food or water, and there is evidence to support the belief that it can live in the soil for considerable periods of time, particularly in wet, badly-drained pastures. The disease can have a very lengthy incubative period, and an animal may carry the infection for years before typical symptoms are shown. This fact creates one of the greatest difficulties in the control of spread of the disease.