

" This table displays more strikingly than it can be said in words the increase that is continuing to take place in the industry. A little calculation shows that pigs killed per sow have increased from about $5\frac{1}{2}$ in 1927 to just over 9 in 1936. This represents an increase in efficiency of sow-management of close on 100 per cent. The gradual change over from bacon to pork and back again in the last two years to bacon-production is also shown in this table. While our porkers have acquired a reputation for excellence on the English market that makes them wholly acceptable, our baconers are not so favourably received. Those interested in the industry realizing the difficulties ahead, and anxious for the welfare of a rapidly-developing bacon export trade, have been anxious to establish an improved national pig service in the Department, and as a result a number of developments have taken place, as follows :—

" National Sow Recording : In response to frequent requests from the New Zealand Pig-breeders' Association and other interested organizations a national system of sow recording was instituted in December of last year. Under this scheme the Department undertakes, through its Stock Inspectors, to weigh the litters of any pedigree sow at three weeks and again at eight weeks. The owner then receives a copy of his sow's record after the details of breeding and mating have been checked by the Pig-breeders' Association. This service is an initial step in the selection of the better strains of breeding stock, a goal that will be attainable only when there are established a number of testing stations where the ability to grow with a minimum of feed, plus the ability to produce a carcass of suitable quality, could be ascertained.

" National Instructional Service : As from the 1st May Cabinet has given its approval for the application of a levy of 2d. per pig on every pig killed for the purpose of establishing a national instructional service for pigs. The organization for the administration of this levy is at present under consideration. It is hoped to establish a National Pig Council, representative of every section of the industry, whose business will be to determine the national policy and allocate the expenditure of this levy. An instructional service in both the Waikato and Manawatu districts controlled by the pig-recording clubs has achieved excellent results in both these places, and it is hoped that on a Dominion-wide basis similar results will be obtained. The specialized quality of both pork and bacon pigs calls for the active dissemination of all available information in order to have the right type of pig produced. By this same means there should be a tendency to improve the conditions under which pigs are kept, and so to remove the major causes of rejection and degrading that are now the chief source of losses in the industry.

" Grading of Pigs : It has been felt for a long time that a similarity of price for pigs of both high and low quality has been discouraging to the producer of high-quality pigs and inimical to the best interests of the industry. In an attempt to introduce some improvement in the present grading of pigs a meeting of those interested was convened, and from this meeting a committee of ten was appointed. Their findings will be given careful consideration with the object of ultimately devising a plan that can be put into operation with a minimum of upset to an already well-established trade. The introduction of stricter grading at this stage may have repercussion on producers, exporters, and in the industry in general that would never have eventuated had grading been in operation from the beginning, and it is of considerable importance that a minimum of disturbances should be caused at this stage. It will be only by the whole-hearted and active co-operation of all interests that successful grading will ultimately eventuate."

DAIRY INSPECTION.

In the safeguarding of public health through its milk-supply an important feature is the inspection by this Division of herds and dairies supplying milk for household use. During the past year, in co-operation with the Department of Health, special attention has been given to the recently-instituted scheme of milk for schools, ensuring that the milk for scholars is obtained only from approved premises.

In the Dominion there are approximately five thousand dairies registered for the supply of raw milk. These are under strict supervision as regards sanitary conditions, and all the equipment is inspected periodically to see that it is maintained in a clean state, while, in addition, the herds themselves come under observation for inspection for disease.

Many structural improvements have been carried out during the year, and a number of new sheds have been erected. Substantial improvement is noted in dairy premises generally.

LIVE-STOCK STATISTICS.

The 1936 sheep returns, collected as at the 30th April, showed that sheep flocks in the Dominion increased by 1,036,950 to a total of 30,113,704. An increase of 856,544 occurred in the number of breeding ewes. The number of sheepowners has increased by 352 to a total of 30,590. The number of cattle in the Dominion as at the 31st January, 1936, decreased by 39,421 to 4,254,078. The number of dairy cows within the total shown decreased by 1,587 to a total of 1,951,507. The number of pigs in the Dominion as revealed in the 1936 enumeration was 808,463, being an increase of 45,708 on the previous year's figures. Horses show an increase of 3,184 to a total of 276,170.

SLAUGHTER OF STOCK.

The total numbers of stock slaughtered at registered premises were : Sheep, 2,901,315 ; lambs, 9,294,722 ; cattle, 506,141 ; calves, 1,045,827 ; swine, 1,062,510.