

CATTLE.

Diseases scheduled under the Stock Act.

Tuberculosis.—The number of cattle condemned in the field in the administration of the Stock Act during the year, either on clinical grounds or as a result of the application of the tuberculin test, was 7,207, compensation being paid in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The tuberculin test was applied to 16,509 cattle, of which number 1,141 reacted, 6·9 per cent.

The total number of cattle, exclusive of calves, examined at the various abattoirs and meat-export slaughterhouses was 500,787, an increase of 83,081 on last year's figures. Of these, 36,992, or 7·38 per cent., were found to be affected with tuberculosis in varying degrees, a large percentage being only slightly affected. This indicates an increase of 0·58-per-cent. infection amongst cattle slaughtered in these premises.

I would reiterate the recommendation that in the control of tuberculosis more extensive application of the tuberculin test should be made compulsory. There can be no denying that the existence of this disease in dairy herds, even though its incidence in New Zealand is low compared with other countries, has a deteriorating effect on the general standard of animal health. The ideal to be aimed at is eradication. If an attempt at total eradication is considered impracticable at the present owing to the financial outlay involved and the difficulty of providing the necessary staff to carry out the testing, I would strongly advocate the commencement of tuberculin testing in areas, with the idea of establishing tuberculosis-free districts. In the past attention has been drawn to the desirability of tuberculin testing all cows supplying milk for human consumption throughout the Dominion. I would again stress this recommendation, which can be regarded as an initiative to a more extensive eradication scheme, and can also be looked upon as an important public-health measure.

Actinomycosis (and Actinobacillosis).—During the year 780 animals were condemned for this disease. Condemnations were confined to (1) cases involving the bony structures of the head which do not readily respond to treatment, (2) run cattle where dosing is not practicable, and (3) occasional cases which fail to respond to potassium-iodide treatment. It is recorded that more farmers are reporting the disease in the early stages, with satisfactory results following treatment.

Malignant Growths.—The number of animals condemned was 488, compensation being paid in accordance with the Stock Act.

Anthrax.—A continuation of the Dominion's freedom from this disease has to be recorded.

Blackleg.—The number of calves vaccinated against this disease in the affected areas of Taranaki and Auckland totalled 35,850, an increase of 6,881 on last year's figure. An increased number of outbreaks were recorded in the Auckland district, but no extension to previously unaffected country occurred, and control measures by vaccination continue to be satisfactory.

Cattle-tick (Haemaphysalis bispinosa).—The position regarding this parasite remains somewhat as in previous years. In the "A" areas the incidence of tick is largely governed by seasonal conditions. As mentioned previously, there is a growing appreciation amongst farmers regarding the comparative innocuity of the cattle-tick as a skin parasite. This has developed to the extent of requesting the rescinding of the Cattle Tick Regulations in certain areas. Already various concessions have been granted as regards dipping, &c., and the whole position will have to be carefully considered in the near future.

Johne's Disease.—Although confined to the Taranaki and Waikato districts, an extension of the number of farms found affected with this disease has unfortunately to be recorded. In the Waikato the disease was confirmed on eight additional farms, and on seven additional farms in Taranaki. This chronic bacterial infection of cattle presents very great difficulties in the matter of control, a most disappointing feature being the occurrence of further cases on certain farms on which the entire herds have been subjected to twice-yearly tests with the diagnostic agent, Johnin. It is therefore apparent that, at least on a percentage of farms, the eradication of Johne's disease presents most formidable difficulties. On the other hand, the position on many farms on which the number of recurring cases is small indicates a more hopeful outlook. The testing of herds for Johne's disease was carried out in the Waikato by Mr. Marshall, assisted by Mr. Mullins. In Taranaki this work is being performed by Mr. Stephens at Stratford, and Mr. Alexander at Hawera.

Non-scheduled Diseases.

Mastitis.—The loss to the dairying industry occasioned annually by this disease calls for the adoption of the most energetic research into every aspect of the condition. Considerable prominence was given to the disease during the year as a result of the visit to the Dominion of Dr. G. J. Hucker, Dairy Bacteriologist of the Geneva Agricultural Station, New York. During his stay here Dr. Hucker collaborated with the workers at the Wallaceville Laboratory on the subject of mastitis, and by arrangement with the Dairy Board addressed meetings of dairy-farmers in several districts. The outcome of deliberations would appear to indicate a recommendation to dairy-farmers along the lines of intensifying the control measures which have been recommended by the Department, rather than hoping for definite curative measures. The adoption of the brom thymol blue test has been recommended as a general routine herd procedure by farmers themselves. Mastitis-indicator sets have been made available by the Department for use by dairy-farmers, and it is hoped that full use will be made of the test in the coming season. The test enables the farmer to pick out affected cows, and thus affords direct incentive to the adoption of control measures recommended, along with being a guide to the extent to which culling should be adopted.