

EXPORTATION OF STOCK.

During the year under review the following animals were exported : Sheep, 13,716 ; cattle, 83 ; pigs, 28 ; horses 8 (draught).

There was the usual movement of thoroughbred horses to and from Australia.

POULTRY.

The poultry section instructional activities have been continued during the year with the instructional staff of four officers available. Some assistance was rendered during the year by attaching the Poultry-farm Overseer from Wallaceville to the Poultry Instructor at Auckland for the culling-season.

In order that more visits to poultry-keepers other than request visits may be made possible so that diseased conditions may be controlled, it is quite apparent that the instructional staff should be strengthened, and this matter is being given consideration.

The report of the Chief Poultry Instructor (Mr. C. J. C. Cussen) is hereunder quoted :—

“ According to figures published by the Government Statistician, it has been estimated that the average annual production of eggs in this country is 375,000,000, and as our egg-export last season only amounted to 841,680 eggs, the local consumption would amount to over 374,000,000, or approximately 235 per person.

“ No statistics are available as to the consumption of poultry-meats, but reports indicate that the consumption of poultry in the Dominion could be increased if more good table poultry was procurable, and more concentration on this aspect of poultry production suggests itself. While the chief aim of the poultry-keeper should be the production of eggs, the very best returns will not be secured from the industry unless both eggs and carcasses are sold to the best advantage.

“ *Organization.*—Owing to the fact that 166,354 householders maintain poultry and over 80 per cent. of these keep less than twenty-five birds, this industry has always been a most difficult one to organize.

“ While there is undoubted evidence of an earnest desire by more poultry-keepers to improve existing conditions and so place the industry on a higher plane there appears to be a lack of uniformity of thought as to the best methods of procedure. Until there is that unity, permanent success can hardly be expected.

“ *Health of Stock.*—It is pleasing to report that the industry enjoyed a comparatively good rearing-season, and that the general health of the stock has been better in most districts than for the past few years. The hen when kept under natural conditions is amongst the most healthy of live-stock, but poultry-keepers should remember that with the adoption of mass-production methods and the intensive system of housing there are increased facilities for the occurrence and dissemination of poultry disease.

“ In some districts, where a few years ago heavy losses were experienced with coccidiosis, the poultry-keepers, by a good clean up, heavy culling, more attention to the selection of breeding-stock, and not overcrowding, have found that what threatened to put them out of business really proved a ‘blessing in disguise.’ These facts are mentioned, as there is evidence to show that in some districts previously clean, but where some poultry-keepers from want of experience had become a little lax in their methods, trouble has recently been experienced. If disease is to be checked and controlled it will rest very largely with the poultry-keeper himself, as the best way to fight disease is to guard against it in the natural way by breeding, feeding, and managing one’s stock in a way that will produce birds with that constitutional vigour and stamina that will resist disease.

“ *Sale of Unfit Stock.*—Where possible the Poultry Instructors have paid visits of inspection to poultry-auction marts, and they report that on several occasions it has been found necessary to condemn stock obviously unfit for sale.

“ The spread of disease through auction marts is a matter that seems to call for even more attention, as a number of poultry-keepers fail to realize their responsibility, or the great danger to the industry of offering unfit birds for sale.

“ *Egg-export.*—During the past season some 2,338 cases—70,140 dozen—of eggs were shipped to the United Kingdom, as compared with 11,281 cases—338,430 dozen—shipped the previous season. This shows a decrease of 268,290 dozen over the previous season’s export.

“ Unfortunately, a number of the eggs shipped from Christchurch reached London in a damaged condition. The cause of this trouble has been traced to the use of rather inferior packing-material in the hope of saving expense. Arrangements have now been made for the use, at each exporting centre, of a standard packing-material, and it is trusted that no further trouble will be experienced in this matter.

“ It is advisable to again mention that although Christchurch is the largest egg-exporting centre in the Dominion, the facilities for grading, packing, and holding of eggs before shipping are inadequate, and the matter of providing better facilities for this work calls for urgent consideration if egg-export is to be placed on a satisfactory footing.

“ *Chick-sexing Examination.*—Two chick-sexing examinations were conducted by the Department during the past year. In all, eight students undertook the examination, two being for first-class certificates and six for second-class certificates. One student qualified for a first-class certificate, and one qualified and had his second-class certificate renewed.

“ At the present time there are two students entitled to sex chickens under a New Zealand Government certificate.

“ If there are sufficient candidates offering, the Department is prepared to undertake further examinations at the beginning of this hatching season.