

“ *Chilled Eggs and Pulp in Cool-store.*—Visits of inspection to the various cool-stores and the Statistician's figures show that more eggs in shell and pulp were placed in store during the year than was the case during the previous season. The following are the figures :—

“ 31st March, 1938 : Eggs in shell, 144,880 dozen.

“ 31st March, 1937 : Eggs in shell, 126,773 dozen.

“ 31st March, 1938 : Pulp in store, 1,306,261 lb.

“ 31st March, 1937 : Pulp in store, 644,385 lb.

“ Some trouble was experienced with eggs placed in cool-store, and in my opinion the cause of these eggs being in poor condition when taken from the store was due to the fact that they had been packed in more or less soiled fillers and flats.

“ In order to save further losses every care will require to be taken to see that only clean, odourless fillers, flats, and cases are used for cool-storing of eggs.

“ *Egg-laying Tests.*—Egg-laying tests were conducted at Auckland, Taranaki, Massey Agricultural College, and at Papanui. These tests were well supported by poultry-keepers, and while many fine birds took part, some of the birds failed to come up to standard.

“ When the Papanui tests were first started the average production for the fifty-one weeks from all birds was 147 eggs, but by careful selecting, breeding, and feeding the average production has been increased up to over 200 eggs per bird in fifty weeks.

“ At first these tests were looked upon as more or less of an egg race, and they served a useful purpose in pointing out the great producing-capacity of certain strains.

“ Experience has gradually shown that if egg-laying tests are to be of the greatest value to the industry the conditions governing all tests should be such that only birds of certain quality should be allowed to compete, and that more credit should be given to the breeding-value of the birds and the quality of eggs produced. For some years all birds entering the Papanui test have been passed by the Department's Instructors, but this is not the case at other tests. However, at all tests the Instructors judge all birds and eggs three times during each test, and prizes are awarded accordingly.

“ It is pleasing to report that at the present time stricter conditions are being considered, and it is hoped that all tests will be run under more uniform conditions, which will enable these tests to render even greater service to the poultry industry.

“ *Wallaceville Poultry Station.*—The Wallaceville breeding and experimental station has had a successful year, and continues to render a useful service to the industry. The demand for eggs and stock for breeding purposes is on the increase. Five feeding-tests were carried out during the year, and a similar number are now being conducted.

“ All young stock are now being trap-nested during their first year's production, and by this means much useful information will be gained as to the breeding-value of each individual bird.

“ *Instructional Staff.*—Reports from the district Poultry Instructors indicate that they have had a busy year, as their services have been in keen demand. Owing to the extent of their districts it has not always been possible for them to attend to all requests as promptly as they would have liked ; nevertheless their work has been much appreciated by poultry-keepers.”

WOOL.

This section of the Division's instructional activities has been given attention in the direction of bringing about improvement in the general condition and quality of the wool output, particularly in respect to small flocks where mixed types of sheep are the rule. With such varied qualities as are produced from these mixed types, the binning practice must as previously advocated by this Division be recommended, as experience has shown that when wool is not in strong demand this class of wool is either neglected by buyers or bought at a low price, definitely based on the poorer qualities within the bale.

I append the report of the Wool Instructor (Mr. J. E. Duncan) hereunder :—

“ Any hopes of woolgrowers for a repetition of last year's excellent prices for wool were quickly dispelled when the selling season opened in Auckland, and the lower level was quickly confirmed at the following sales. Demand was good, at a price, and large quantities of wool on which the growers had placed reserves in keeping with the previous year's prices were passed in at the earlier sales.

“ It is a truism that the only certain thing about the wool market is its uncertainty. The wage-level and purchasing-power of the public were high, and business was brisk in Britain, yet towards the end of last year there suddenly became evident, for no apparent reason, a complete lack of confidence throughout the wool trade.

“ This could not have been attributed to a glut of raw material, for all sections of the trade were carrying light stocks, and in New Zealand there had been practically no carry-over from the previous season. Another surprise was the comparative inactivity of Japan in the market, for her purchases this season have been negligible compared with the previous one. The Continental buyers were somewhat more active, but again only at a price.

“ The gross receipts from wool sold in New Zealand this season are less than those of last season by £6,209,384. This figure does not take into account a considerable further quantity of wool shipped on growers' account for sale abroad and wool bought privately ; also wool from fellmongeries and freezing-works. Exact figures for these are not available, but it is probable that the total reduction in receipts from New Zealand wool will be in the neighbourhood of £7,000,000 or £7,500,000 this season as compared with last.