

A factory in a district, no doubt, whilst at work is the means of a number of rabbits being destroyed, but it also has the tendency to make owners farm them during the rest of the year, especially among small owners.

Dunedin, 2nd June, 1892.

BLAIR FULLARTON, Inspector.

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*Clyde District.*

THE means adopted for the destruction of rabbits are—phosphorized grain in winter, trapping, ferreting, fumigating, and flooding out the burrows in summer.

The summer being in before taking charge of this district, I am not in a position to say whether the rabbits are on the increase or decrease, but from inquiries made throughout the district am of opinion they are not so numerous as last year. There are some localities where they are still very numerous, but on the whole there has been good work done this summer. I have hopes, with a good poisoning season, and the work of destruction carried on in the early spring, to see the pest considerably reduced in numbers. The ferrets are doing good work at the head of the Wanaka, and are increasing fast.

I would suggest that encouragement be given to landowners to turn out ferrets in large numbers in spring when the rabbits start breeding. I should likewise be pleased to see trained ferrets take the place of traps, where practicable.

Clyde, 24th May, 1892.

A. IRONSDALE, Inspector.

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*Tapanui District.*

RABBITS, on the whole, show a slight decrease for the last twelve months. They are thick in patches, but there is not that wholesale destruction to crops and grass that was so common a short time back. The few cases of crop-destruction that I have had to deal with is where cultivation joins rough country—that is, ground bad with rocks, under-runners, and scrub. These places are hard to keep clear, even when landowners are using their utmost endeavours. Wire-netting the fences is the only way to cope with rabbits in ground like this.

The means adopted for destruction of rabbits in my district are—poisoned grain, trapping, exterminating with poisonous gases, working ferrets in hand, shooting, and dogging. A real good poisoning in the most suitable winter months, followed immediately by other means, seems to me the best method of coping with the pest. I am of opinion that ferrets and cats, worked in a proper manner, that is, turned out in numbers and the locality protected, would clear rough country.

Brooksdale Station turned out large numbers of ferrets on their back country (a rough barren place, infested with rabbits) some years ago. Now the rabbits are scarce, the ferrets numerous, and the grass in splendid order. Moa Flat Station did the same with their back country, and a most pronounced improvement has taken place. Ferrets make no headway on low country, for the simple reason they are trapped before they can increase.

Personally, I think poison and ferrets in hand for low country, and poison, ferrets, and cats turned loose in numbers on high country. Weasels are becoming numerous about Tapanui.

Tapanui, 25th May, 1892.

R. H. HASSALL, Inspector.

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*Invercargill District.*

ALTHOUGH the last three springs have been exceptionally favourable for the breeding of the rabbit, they have been kept down. Everyone is doing good work, with the exception of a few dilatory persons whom I have had before the Resident Magistrates' Courts in their respective districts, and which has proved a good warning to others. I trust that in a very short time, by making everyone do good work, there will be a very marked difference all over my district. A proof that the rabbits are decreasing is that the rabbit-factories have not been receiving anything like the supply this year that they did last.

There has been a deal of correspondence in the papers with regard to postponing the general poisoning till much later in the season. This, I consider, would not do in my district. Of course you cannot make any fixed rule when poisoning should start, as the season, locality, &c., has to be taken into consideration. But I do not believe in putting it off too late, as the country cannot get a good poisoning before the spring sets in, and the rabbits are breeding on the warm low ground. I find that July is the best month to poison all the low-lying country, as the frosts have by then cut down what extra feed there is, and settlers have plenty of time to go over their ground again where rabbits are showing up and give it a second poisoning before the grass has made a start.

The means of destruction were—poisoning, ferreting, trapping, dogging, digging out, and fumigating.

If ferrets were liberated in the spring and early summer, in certain localities, they would do an unusual deal of good, but I do not believe in turning them out in the autumn at all.

Invercargill.

H. T. TURNER, Inspector.

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