

The above conditions applied generally throughout all the sheep districts, and the result was one of the best lambing seasons on record. It is another case of outstanding evidence as to the extent to which much of our live-stock health and production depends upon favourable climatic and feed conditions. In other words, actual losses from such diseases are reduced by the influence of favourable climatic conditions and the practice of sound sheep feeding and management.

*Parasitic Gastroenteritis.*—All districts report a very favourable season for the sheep-farmer, consequently, the mortality in hoggets has been lower than normal. Worm infestation of sheep is so closely connected with the type of season, rainfall, feed quality and quantity, and overstocking and understocking that success or failure in sheep-production is largely governed by the type of season. A dry season is most desirable for sheep, provided growth is reasonably good. The position in any season requires constant vigilance, but the heavy mortalities in the past have invariably been recorded in the wetter seasons or districts.

To-day it is generally recognized that a regular worm-drenching practice and reasonable feed conditions are necessary if hoggets are to be raised with a minimum of losses. Good results are also being obtained by some South Island farmers through providing such supplementary feeding as oats and chaff to lambs at an early age, so that, should the season and feed position become unfavourable for the lambs, the supplementary feeding may be increased and normal results obtained. It has long been recognized that adequate feeding is the important key to successful hogget-rearing and to the prevention and control of the parasitic position on many sheep-farms.

*Contagious Ecthyma (Sore Mouth).*—This disease of sheep should no longer be viewed seriously by the sheep-farmer. It has been demonstrated in many districts that the vaccination of animals is a reliable preventative, and farmers who have experienced an outbreak should not hesitate to vaccinate their flocks in a subsequent season.

The vaccine is supplied from the Animal Research Station, Wallaceville, and a demonstration of the method of vaccination may be arranged for an owner.

*Contagious Ophthalmia (Pink-eye).*—This disease has not been prevalent during the year. In the few outbreaks which have been reported to the Department the owners have been advised as to remedial measures.

*Hydatid Disease.*—The incidence of hydatid disease in stock sent forward for slaughter has not materially improved. Certain lines of sheep sent forward were heavily infested, reflecting the carelessness of owners and shepherds in not dosing their dogs with the recognized worm medicine. Much publicity has been given to hydatids in animals and man, and it is to be regretted that so little interest has been taken.

The attention of owners has been drawn to the fact that their stock has been found to be badly infested, in the hope that the dosing of dogs would be immediately carried out.

On the other hand, a few owners have sent forward particularly clean lines of lambs and sheep. On inquiry, it was found that the dogs had been dosed regularly and then fed on food free from hydatid infection. Such instances provide substantial proof, if any more proof is necessary, that the remedy is simple and effective. It remains for it to be applied conscientiously by the large body of dogowners throughout the country.

It has been noted that several works record a marked reduction in the so-called *Cysticercus ovis* infection of lamb carcasses, and also that more livers have been saved.

*Facial Eczema.*—Reports received during the latter part of the year show that, though no serious outbreak of this disease occurred in any district, it was evident that sheep were slightly affected on several properties on the East Coast. A change of grazing in most cases effected control, and it is pleasing to report that no serious mortality occurred on any farm.

*Liver-fluke and Black Disease.*—Vaccination of sheep in the fluke district is the recognized method of preventing any losses from black disease.

Liver-fluke is now prevalent in sheep sent forward from some parts of Central Otago. A few years ago only an occasional parasite was seen, but there is no doubt that fluke infestation is gradually increasing in this district. An intermediate host is known to exist in the district, and the snail has been shown to harbour fluke larvæ on affected farms. The infestation in lines of ewes sent forward for slaughter has been as high as 95 per cent., whereas lambs have carried flukes to the extent of over 50 per cent.

The whole question of the parasitic infestation and the measures of control likely to be effective in checking any further spread in the area has been the subject of lectures and demonstrations in the district concerned. Reference has also been made to the subject by a newspaper article and a wireless talk. The farmers concerned are therefore fully cognizant of the possible consequences of neglecting to deal with the parasite at this stage. The risk of black disease appearing in the affected sheep is the main danger, but, as no mortality has appeared so far, a certain amount of apathy is shown by the farmers concerned.

*Blackleg in Sheep.*—Although blackleg in sheep is not frequently seen in New Zealand, a number of mortalities investigated during the year show that the disease may be found in sheep in certain circumstances. In the outbreaks where it has been considered advisable to vaccinate against the disease, the results obtained have been uniformly good.

*Cutaneous Myiasis (Sheep Blow-fly).*—The season was a good one, in that less trouble was experienced from the blow-fly than in some previous years. Reports show that on several occasions the fly was rather active in the North Canterbury districts, but other districts report less trouble.

*Foot-rot.*—There is always a good demand for the Department's bulletin on this disease. The measures of control outlined in the bulletin cover the subject fully. No doubt in the present circumstances a shortage of labour may prevent the regular application in some cases of the measures necessary to keep the disease under control. The season was favourable to better control of the disease.