

For the year under review, 876,316 calves were collected in gazetted pool areas, and of these, 806,398 were passed for export. This left 69,918 condemned at the works as underweights, or 7.9 per cent. of the total. This latter figure represents an increase in percentage of underweights of 0.9 per cent. as against the previous year, but this is in actual fact an improvement when it is realized that an additional 50,000 calves were handled. The average cartage cost per head shows an increase of halfpenny over the previous year, bringing this cost up to 1s. 8½d. per head. The total amount paid to producers was £682,588, bringing the average payment per calf to 15s. 7d., or 3s. 1d. above that of the previous year. The railways and other transport operators received a total of £75,000 from calf transport during the same period.

During the year under review the Bobby Calf Marketing Regulations 1947 were gazetted, and as a result a number of new provisions were introduced. One clause altered the date of the closing of the financial year to the 31st December in each year. It is hoped that this will allow a summary of each season's operations to be made so as to be of benefit when annual meetings are held during March–April–May of the following year.

Another clause provided that no cash payment could be made at a freezing-works for a calf, which will undoubtedly allow accurate checks to be made as to the vendor of any calf should a pool authority desire such action. Provision has also been made for an audited balance-sheet to be presented by every pool authority at each annual meeting of the pool.

The introduction of a number of clauses providing for the treatment and handling of calves was well received by organizations interested in the treatment of calves between the farm and the processing-works. While their provisions will undoubtedly assist the position materially, every effort is and will be made to improve the transport of these animals. Any complaint is carefully investigated, and, wherever possible, the Division assists in adjusting the position to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned.

The handling of calves has also been under discussion with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. A deputation from this Society waited upon the Hon. the Minister of Marketing, and the position was very fully discussed. In order that the position may be more thoroughly checked it is intended to carry out a survey of the conditions to which calves are subjected between the farm-gate and the rail or works. This will be done with a view to checking on whether proper pens are being placed at collection points, and also whether the types of crates used on motor-trucks are adequate for the protection of the calves.

The Central Executive, which is the voice of the industry, is not established on a very stable basis, and should it be decided to give it more authoritative powers some proper elective system would be necessary. The Division has, however, had the full co-operation of this body at all times, and a number of problems have been overcome to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned.

It is the intention of the Division, as requested, to have an officer attend all annual meetings of producers next autumn, when the opportunity will be taken to stress the need for improvement in the number of calves condemned through being underweight, with a resultant loss of veal, which is an exportable commodity. The constant need for better treatment of calves is also stressed at all times, and this, combined with the efforts of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals should bring about some general realization that good treatment of calves is essential for their well being.

Another matter that will receive some attention is the abuse of saleyards by producers seeking prices far in excess of the value of calves. This method of disposal is not only having a detrimental effect on the pool organizations, but calves are subjected to a good deal of unnecessary double handling and yarding. Many of the pools have requested that some action be taken in this regard.