

APPENDIX.

LIVE-STOCK DIVISION.

REPORT OF THE DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR.

Wellington, 15th June, 1918.

The Secretary of Agriculture, Industries, and Commerce.

I FORWARD herewith the annual report on the operations of this division for the year 1917-18.

(C. J. REAKES, D.V.Sc., M.R.C.V.S., Director.

INTRODUCTION.

In spite of the depletion of the staff consequent upon the war the various duties assigned to this division have been carried out without serious difficulty. For some months practically the whole of my time was occupied by special work in connection with Imperial Government purchases of wool, hides, skins, &c., and during this period the direction of the work of the division was efficiently conducted by the principal officers of the headquarters staff, Messrs. A. R. Young, Veterinary Supervisor, and Mr. J. L. Bruce, Assistant Director, with Mr. A. Ironside, Chief Clerk. At the same time the whole staff of the division worked intelligently and energetically, and the general good work done is fully appreciated. Owing to the number of trained Meat Inspectors who have joined the Forces, responsible duties had perforce to be entrusted to men who should have had a longer period of training beforehand. These officers, however, have done their best, and the results under the circumstances must be regarded as being quite satisfactory.

ANIMAL-DISEASE.

No serious outbreak of disease among live-stock has occurred during the year, and those diseases which are already established in the Dominion have been kept well under control.

Blackleg.—During the year new regulations were gazetted for the purpose of enabling blackleg to be more effectively coped with in the Auckland Provincial District, practically the whole of the country from Auckland City southwards to and including Waitomo County and the top corner of West Taupo County, but not including Tauranga, Rotorua, or East Taupo Counties on the east, being declared an affected area. As a result of this the work of inoculation against blackleg is very greatly increased, and up to the 31st March 226,100 doses of vaccine had been sent out from the laboratory for use in the Auckland and Taranaki Districts. In the preceding twelve months the total number of doses sent out was 133,880. The effect of this inoculation work has been satisfactory, and the number of deaths from the disease has been very small.

Contagious Abortion in Cows.—This has caused some trouble during the year, but nothing more than usual. The officer in charge of the laboratory is carrying out some experimental work with a preventive vaccine, this being based on the work which is being done in England in the same direction. The cultures necessary for the preparation of the vaccine were obtained from England, and the result is looked forward to with interest. This cannot be known until the coming spring. If it proves satisfactory, work on a much larger scale will be undertaken. One drawback to this method of combating the disease lies in the fact that the doses of vaccine which require to be administered are bulky, this necessitating the preparation of large quantities of the material if the method is extensively adopted. Another point is that the treatment can be applied only to empty cows.

Contagious Mammitis. This continues to be prevalent in the dairying districts, and is an exceedingly troublesome disease to combat. Large numbers of specimens of milk from suspected animals are examined at the laboratory, and all advice and assistance possible is given to farmers.

Bush Sickness. Experimental work in connection with this dietetic trouble is being continued at the Mamaku Farm, and further information regarding the methods of treatment has been acquired. While the value of phosphatic manures as a means of combating the trouble has been further emphasized, it is evident that these alone are not sufficient to completely overcome the trouble, though they certainly enhance the grazing-value of the land to which they are applied to a very great extent, and enable cattle and sheep to remain in normal health for a considerably longer period than would be the case with animals grazed on land not top-dressed. Experimental work on new lines is being carried out, but it is regretted that pressure of work in other directions has to some extent debarred the investigation work being carried out so closely and thoroughly as would be possible under normal conditions. The results of the general farming-work carried out on the Mamaku Farm, apart from experiments, have been satisfactory from a financial standpoint.

Tuberculosis.—The complete returns obtained from the results of the inspection of stock on slaughter at abattoirs and meat-export slaughterhouses show that a slight increase has again taken place in the percentage of cattle and pigs found affected with tuberculosis in any degree. While this