

WALLACEVILLE LABORATORY.

The staff of the laboratory during the greater part of the year was reduced to the Acting Veterinary Officer in Charge and one cadet, the second laboratory assistant following the first into the Expeditionary Forces; consequently the operations of the institution necessarily had to be limited to the carrying-out of current work in connection with the examination of milk, specimens from animals suspected of disease, the preparation of vaccine, &c. This was all that could be done, especially as the Officer in Charge had also to be entrusted with the veterinary work connected with the Remount Depot. In view, however, of the necessity for doing all that is possible to safeguard the health of the live-stock of the Dominion, it is not desirable that this curtailment of laboratory work should continue, and steps have been taken to so increase the staff that investigation and research can be again undertaken.

IMPORTATION OF ANIMAL-MANURES.

Owing to shortage of shipping and temporary embargo upon the export of manure from the Commonwealth, imports from that country have decreased considerably. From Calcutta supplies have kept well up, notwithstanding the uncertainty of securing shipping-space.

SHEEP-DIPPING

This important work still requires attention. Some apprehension existed at one time whether sufficient supplies of dip would be available, but it is satisfactory to state that the supply is sufficient for requirements, and, although labour is more or less difficult to obtain, there is every reason to believe that dipping will be carried out as usual.

WOOL, SKINS, HIDES, AND TALLOW.

Wool.—Excepting the hogget wool, which was more or less “tender,” and more “seedy” wool than usual from some districts, the season’s clip was up to the average, well grown, and slightly heavier than last year. The clip was again taken over by the Imperial Government at the same arrangement regarding price and under the same conditions as formerly.

Sheep-skins.—These continued to be acquired by the Imperial Government as formerly, excepting that the prices have been rearranged as follows:—

| | Merino Skins. | Half-bred Skins. | Fine Cross-bred Skins. | Coarse Cross-bred Skins. |
|---|---------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| | d. | d. | d. | d. |
| Three-quarter to full woolled sound skins | 10½–11½ | 13–14 | 12–13 | 11½–12½ |
| Half-woolled sound skins | 8½–9¾ | 11–12 | 10½–11½ | 10–11½ |
| Short to quarter woolled sound skins | 7½–8½ | 9½–10¾ | 9½–10¾ | 8½–10¾ |
| Shorn, sound | 5¾–6¾ | 8–9 | 8½–9½ | 8–10 |
| Lamb-skins, sound, 11d.–12½d. | | | | |

All skins with damaged or faulty pelts are to be valued at prices proportionate to those shown above. In valuing green or salted sound skins allowance is to be made for the extra value of the pelts as compared with dried sound skins of similar quality. Seedy skins are to be valued at lower values according to their condition. Black skins are to be valued according to their proportionate value to ordinary skins of the same class.

Hides.—The purchase of hides on behalf of the Imperial Government was continued at former prices and conditions, but during March the purchase was, at the request of the Imperial Government, discontinued.

Tallow.—Stocks are very heavy, but export is now permitted to Great Britain and to the United States of America and Canada on a permit being obtained from the Hon. the Minister of Customs. The amount of shipping-space available, however, limits the exports, even for the United States and Canada, to small quantities only, considering the quantity held in store.

POULTRY INDUSTRY.

Owing to the scarcity of foodstuffs it was not to be expected that much advance could be made in this industry during the year. The energies of the officers have been chiefly devoted in assisting to maintain the industry in as good a position as the circumstances would allow. The high cost of food has directed attention in a striking manner to the necessity of culling all inferior stock. This has meant such a greatly increased demand for the services of the poultry instructors that it has been difficult to keep pace with it. As a result of their work in this direction thousands of unprofitable birds have been weeded out from the many poultry plants visited. The high egg-yielding results obtained in the experiments conducted by the Department at the Milton Poultry-station, in which wheat and pollard was eliminated from the ration, has had a good effect: it has induced many poultrymen to use substitutes for dear wheat. This, with the heavy culling of useless stock, has led to greatly decreased cost of production without appreciably reducing the output. At the Milton Station the demand for settings of eggs and birds for breeding purposes at moderate rates has been well maintained. While the cost of foodstuffs has ruled at a high level during the year, it is satisfactory to know that the prices for both eggs and table poultry have been exceptionally good. The crisis has been a severe test to the industry, but poultrymen are to be congratulated on its present position.