

Blackberry has received special attention, and certainly a great deal more work has been done in connection with it during the year than at any previous period. Wherever the plough can be used this pest does not present a serious difficulty, seeing that it can be thus eradicated at not unreasonable cost, but on unploughable country it certainly does constitute a practical problem. A good deal of experimental work has been carried out in the endeavour to find a safe blight or other pest which will destroy blackberry, but so far it cannot be said that anything sufficiently satisfactory has been discovered. The Department at the present time is also experimenting extensively with poisons to be applied by means of a spraying-apparatus, but the forms of such treatment so far tried only destroy the growing plant for the season, and do not prevent recurrent growth. Whether any chemical treatment can be discovered which will completely eradicate the plant at a sufficiently reasonable cost is problematical, but having regard to the seriousness of the pest no effort is being spared in endeavouring to discover better means of dealing with it which at the same time are not so costly as to be prohibitive. The Government has offered a bonus of £10,000 for an effective, practical, and not too costly method of eradicating blackberry, which may bring results.

Ragwort is very troublesome in some districts, and the Department itself has on occasions had to deal with it on properties whose owners have "walked off," this being necessary for safeguarding the interests of adjacent settlers. On country where sheep can be grazed this weed may be kept from being troublesome, but on dairy farms where cattle only are kept it requires regular attention on the part of the occupiers to keep it in check and to do what is possible to eradicate it.

As regards Californian thistle, few settlers look upon this weed as being troublesome in pastoral areas, and a number of local authorities have removed it from the schedule so far as their districts are concerned. In agricultural areas, however, it is a serious nuisance.

It is satisfactory to note that a greater desire on the part of the settlers to deal with noxious weeds has been observed, and a continuance of this feeling will be of material assistance to the Department's officers in carrying out their duties of inspection. Noxious weeds are further referred to in the report of the Live-stock Division.

The staff of the Live-stock Division has done good work throughout, and its advisory and instructional activities have developed considerably.

#### THE DAIRY INDUSTRY.

The work of the Dairy Division has steadily increased, and the Division's already high standard of efficiency has been fully maintained. The year has been a good one for the industry, though prices did not reach so high a level as in the preceding period. The total value of all dairy-products exported reached £18,834,302, an increase of £266,828 over the previous year, this increase being due to increased production.

The quality of the butter and cheese manufactured has continued good, but with increasing competition in the world's markets, and improved methods of manufacture in other exporting countries, it is continuously necessary to do all that is possible to still further raise the standard and quality of our dairy-products, and the efforts of the Department are very definitely aimed in this direction. The cordial co-operation existing between officers of the Dairy Division and factory-managers constitutes a material aid in this direction.

Some two years ago complaints were received from Great Britain regarding the presence of excess water in New Zealand butter, and steps were at once taken to institute a system of testing butter for water content here before shipment. This action has had the result of preventing a continuance of the trouble, and no complaints regarding excess of water in butter have been received during the year.

One measure taken with the full co-operation and assistance of the Dairy Control Board, the National Dairy Association, and factory directors and managers, was the establishment of a higher standard of minimum points for first-grade butter and cheese. This was brought into operation with very little difficulty or friction, and an improvement in the quality of both butter and cheese is already noticeable as a result.

Expansion of the system of farm-dairy instruction carried out in co-operation with individual dairy factories or groups of factories has taken place, and there can be no doubt that this work is proving of great advantage to the industry. It enables faults in milk or cream which are discovered at a factory to be investigated by the instructor on the farm of origin, and the cause dealt with and eliminated, and thereby has the effect of raising the standard of quality of raw material delivered at the factory. The cost of each of these instructors is borne partly by the dairy factories and partly by the Department, and the system is working well. Side by side with the work of the farm-dairy instructors, factories have in a large number of cases established a system of cream-grading. Suppliers of cream of good quality are thus enabled to receive the full value of their product, while