

Not only has there been an extension in the original system of association testing of dairy cows for yield, but it is pleasing to record an extension of the "group system." Last season 43,144 cows, or 40.2 per cent. of cows tested by other than Dairy Division officers, were included in "group," associations. It is expected that figures for the season just ended will bring this number to around 95,000 cows.

STAFF.

I desire to acknowledge the hearty co-operation and support of Mr. W. E. Gwillim, Assistant Director, in the direction of the Division's work throughout the year. The Division lost during the year the services of Mr. J. Pedersen, who for many years acted as Instructor in the manufacture of butter and casein. Mr. Pedersen was an officer with a thorough knowledge of the manufacture of these products, and as the Division is understaffed his loss is felt all the more. Mr. Pedersen's position has not yet been filled, although certain adjustments in staff have been made in an endeavour to cope with the work as far as possible. The season has been a particularly heavy one for the staff, and the cordial co-operation, attention, and enthusiasm of all members is gratefully acknowledged.

HORTICULTURE DIVISION.

REPORT OF J. A. CAMPBELL, DIRECTOR.

Every effort has been made to carry out the various phases of operations coming within the scope of the Division of Horticulture as efficiently as possible during the past year.

THE FRUITGROWING INDUSTRY.

A considerable improvement has taken place in the fruitgrowing industry of the Dominion. The satisfactory prices realized on the Home markets last season have greatly encouraged growers to renewed activity, and there is every indication that future prospects will be considerably brighter than has been the case during past years. Good work was done by Mr. T. W. Attwood, ex-President of the New Zealand Fruitgrowers' Federation (Limited), who, on behalf of the Federation, investigated the conditions under which New Zealand fruit was received and distributed on the English and Continental markets during 1924. A comprehensive report received from him indicates that the prospects for New Zealand apples on the Home markets are very favourable. In order to maintain the good name New Zealand fruit has gained on this market, it is very important that nothing but best-quality fruit, well graded and packed, should be exported, and every precaution is being taken in this direction by officers of the Division.

For the purpose of the proper control of the fruit industry of the Dominion the Fruit Control Act was passed last session. Polls of producers taken in December last resulted in the provisions of the first Part of the Act, relating to export control, being carried by a majority of 151 votes. The proposal with respect to provincial control of fruit intended for sale on New Zealand markets was negatived in each province. As a result of a petition signed by not less than 70 per cent. of the producers of the Provincial District of Otago, this district was excluded from the operation of Part I of the Act, in accordance with section 4 thereof. No fruit having been exported from the Canterbury Provincial District during the year ending 31st August, 1924, producers in this district were not entitled to vote in regard to Part I of the Fruit Control Act.

There has been a gradual easing-up during recent years in the area planted in commercial orchards—only some 38 acres being set out during the 1924 planting season. The total area in commercial orchards for the whole of the Dominion stands at approximately 30,000 acres, of which about 75 per cent. consists of apples.

Citrus fruits have given good yields. A good season has been experienced by strawberry-growers, the crop being well above the average. The regulations relating to the packing of strawberries for sale, which were brought into operation in September last, have had a good effect both for the producer and consumer, a much better uniformity in size, maturity, and condition being now in evidence. The tomato crop, generally speaking, was a good one, though fungoid disease was fairly prevalent in some districts.

No serious outbreak of orchard diseases has taken place during the year. The ordinary pests and diseases affecting fruit-trees have been satisfactorily controlled in the bulk of the commercial orchards. Work in connection with the control of fireblight disease has taken up a good deal of the Instructors' time in the Auckland District. It is satisfactory to be able to report that no serious spread of the disease has taken place during the year in the commercial fruit areas. A slight extension is, however, noticeable in the non-commercial areas, the infection being mainly confined to hawthorn hedges. A slight outbreak was discovered in one or two fruit-trees close to Wanganui. Prompt measures were taken to prevent further infection, and it is not considered that any serious trouble will be experienced in this locality.

Brown rot in stone-fruits has again been prevalent, more especially in the Auckland District, where the crops have been largely reduced on account of this disease. The matter of arriving at some efficient method of controlling the disease has been receiving attention for some time past, but so far no satisfactory results have been obtained, mainly on account of orchardists generally not carrying out