

Cattle.—While the total number of cattle have decreased by 59,663, the number of dairy cows and heifers of two years of age and over have increased by 10,843. The following table shows the position under the respective classes, together with the previous four years :—

Year.	Bulls.	Dairy Cows.	Other Cattle.	Total.
1921	59,348	1,004,666	2,075,209	3,139,223
1922	59,086	1,137,055	2,127,082	3,323,223
1923	60,154	1,248,643	2,171,897	3,480,694
1924	58,934	1,312,589	2,192,074	3,563,497
1925	59,820	1,323,432	2,120,492	3,503,744

Swine.—An increase of 25,844 in swine has taken place, the total number as at January, 1925, being 440,125.

Horses.—Horses have again shown a decrease, the 1925 figures being 326,830, a decrease of 3,600.

SLAUGHTER OF STOCK.

The slaughtering season opened late owing to the extremely backward spring experienced generally. Last season's prices for fat sheep and lambs were not maintained, and opening prices for this season showed a tendency to further drop. They have, however, been fairly well maintained on a payable basis. Cattle-slaughterings have decreased owing to the low prices offering in the export market. Sheep-slaughterings also have decreased, but increased slaughterings of lambs more than made up for this deficiency.

The following table shows the stock slaughtered at freezing establishments alone during the year, with the previous year's figures shown also :—

Stock.	Year ended 31st March, 1926.	Year ended 31st March, 1925.	Increase.	Decrease.
Cattle	206,904	247,883	..	40,979
Sheep	2,292,257	2,564,530	..	272,273
Lambs	5,055,245	4,832,493	222,752	..
Calves	31,358	22,775	8,583	..
Swine	159,852	142,168	17,684	..

For purposes of comparison the following table shows the killings of sheep and lambs over four periods—1st October to 31st March in each year—as indicative of the slaughterings from the beginning of each season to 31st March :—

Stock.	1922-23.	1923-24.	1924-25.	1925-26.
Sheep	1,244,490	1,462,128	1,821,901	1,654,489
Lambs	3,128,415	3,492,004	3,360,761	3,574,508

These figures show a decreased slaughtering of sheep of 167,412 for the period 1st October, 1925, to 31st March, 1926, compared with the same period of 1924-25, but an increase in lambs of 213,747 more than balances the aggregate figures.

The following are the numbers of each class of animal slaughtered under direct inspection during the year ended 31st March, 1926 :—

Cattle	364,572
Calves	74,600
Sheep	2,804,772
Lambs	5,140,443
Swine	329,990

The following table indicates the respective class of premises at which these animals were slaughtered :—

Stock.	Abattoirs.	Meat-export Slaughterhouses.	Bacon-factories.
Cattle	157,668	206,904	..
Calves	43,242	31,358	..
Sheep	512,515	2,292,257	..
Lambs	85,198	5,055,245	..
Swine	127,216	159,852	42,922