

LIVE-STOCK STATISTICS.

Sheep.—A substantial increase in the numbers of sheep held in the Dominion was again revealed in the returns collected as at the 30th April, 1929. The returns show an increase of 1,917,572 in the total sheep. Of this number, the increase in breeding-ewes was 1,074,104, bringing the total number of sheep to 29,051,382 and breeding-ewes to 16,608,155. Of the increase shown, the South Island is responsible for 811,233 and the North Island for 1,106,339. It is also of interest to note that the number of owners of sheep have increased by 730. The number of lambs slaughtered at freezing-works for the year under review was 6,462,783, an increase of 431,772. For the same period sheep slaughtered showed an increase of 442,476. Cattle show an increase in all classes compared with the previous year's figures. The total for 1929 is 3,445,790 head, including 1,371,063 dairy cows. A decrease of 30,166 in swine has taken place, the total number at 31st January, 1929, being 556,732. A decrease of 8,174 horses has taken place compared with the figures for the previous year, the figures being 298,980.

SLAUGHTER OF STOCK.

A very satisfactory lambing season was experienced, and, contrary to earlier expectations, weather conditions eventually turned out to be quite excellent, and resulted in a heavy slaughtering season for both sheep and lambs. The number of sheep and lambs slaughtered for the year ended 31st March, 1930, both for export and local consumption, easily constituted a record, resulting in a total of 10,014,917, made up of 3,420,282 sheep and 6,594,635 lambs, being an increase of 440,216 sheep and 445,153 lambs when compared with the previous year. The number of cattle slaughtered show a decrease of 40,362, but swine show a recorded increased slaughtering of 8,282 and calves an increase of 45,387. The following table shows the stock slaughtered during the past year at freezing-works only, the previous year's figures being shown for comparison :—

Stock.					Year ending 31st March, 1930.	Year ending 31st March, 1929.	Increase.	Decrease.
Cattle	..	..	..	..	138,467	165,643	..	27,176
Calves	..	..	..	..	393,513	342,582	50,931	..
Sheep	..	..	..	..	2,598,510	2,156,034	442,476	..
Lambs	..	..	..	..	6,462,783	6,031,011	431,772	..
Swine	..	..	..	..	279,230	270,084	9,146	..

For further purposes of comparison the following table is given showing the killings of sheep and lambs at meat-export slaughterhouses 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.					1926-27.	1927-28.	1928-29.	1929-30.
Sheep	..	..	..	..	1,729,963	1,580,024	1,421,741	1,982,550
Lambs	..	..	..	..	3,806,498	4,093,750	4,093,332	4,431,424

As will be seen, these figures show an increase in slaughtering of sheep and lambs of 898,901 for the period 1st October, 1929, to 31st March, 1930, compared with the same period for the year 1928-29, and from indications the close of the slaughtering season should disclose a record increase compared with any previous year.

Following are the numbers of each class of animal slaughtered under direct inspection during the year ended 31st March, 1930 : Cattle, 284,517 ; calves, 438,678 ; sheep, 3,178,625 ; lambs, 6,570,316 ; swine, 458,608.

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

Stock.						Abattoirs.	Meat-export Slaughterhouses.	Bacon-factories.
Cattle	..	..	..	..	..	146,050	138,467	..
Calves	..	..	..	..	..	45,165	393,513	..
Sheep	..	..	..	..	..	580,115	2,598,510	..
Lambs	..	..	..	..	..	107,533	6,462,783	..
Swine	..	..	..	..	..	141,208	279,230	38,170

Stock slaughtered at ordinary slaughterhouses during the year ended 31st March, 1930, was as follows : Cattle, 78,451 ; calves, 1,696 ; sheep, 241,657 ; lambs, 24,319 ; swine, 27,299.