

touch has been maintained with similar work being done in other countries, and the reports just received of the International Veterinary Congress recently held in London indicate that New Zealand is keeping well abreast of overseas progress.

Though heavy losses occurred through drought conditions in Hawke's Bay, sheep diseases have not caused any serious mortality, the feed and weather conditions in the past autumn not being conducive to large losses of hoggets such as occurred in the North Island in the late autumn of 1929. As a matter of fact, much of the trouble occurring among both sheep and dairy cattle can be prevented by the exercise of the best-known management methods, and endeavours have been made to still further develop advisory services specially directed to this end. The Field Veterinarians, in connection with their general work of investigating disease outbreaks and unusual troubles among farm stock, make a point of advising farmers on preventive measures, most of which are directly associated with stock-management methods aimed at the maintenance of health and vigour in stock. Side by side with this, the Stock Inspectors are being more and more converted into animal-husbandry advisory officers in conjunction with their statutory duties, the good knowledge of stock-management which by observation and experience they have gained rendering them well fitted for advisory work of this character, especially when the technical knowledge of the Veterinary staff is translated into suitable propaganda material for their use among farmers.

Advantage has been taken of an offer from the Dominion Group Herd-testing Federation to allow its testing officers to collaborate with the Department by collecting data regarding the actual incidence of disease among dairy cows and other causes necessitating removals from the herd. The testing officers in the course of their duties have good facilities for obtaining this information at first-hand from farmers throughout each milking season, and the information supplied by them has enabled the Department's Farm Economist to compile some very useful and illuminative statistical figures based upon results in 2,547 dairy herds containing an aggregate of 128,283 cows. This shows that the wastage in these herds from all causes during the 1929-30 season was 10·7 per cent., of which 3·7 per cent. was on account of sickness or disease, including breeding troubles, and 5·3 per cent. on account of low production. This compares favourably with other dairying countries concerning which similar information is available. In Denmark, for instance, the annual wastage is stated to be 16·7 per cent., of which 10 per cent. represents breeding difficulties. There is still plenty of room for improvement in New Zealand, especially as figures taken over the whole of our dairy herds would probably show a higher average. The considerable number of cows culled on account of low production emphasizes the value of herd-testing.

One of the serious troubles of the dairy-farmer is mammitis, and it can be taken for granted that the culling on account of this by no means represents its real incidence, as many affected cows would be put under treatment and reinstated as effective members of the milking herd when their condition returned to apparent normality. At the last International Veterinary Congress mammitis was extensively discussed, and it was accepted that no method of treatment has yet been found which could be relied upon as effective for either preventive or curative purposes. The exercise of care as regards cleanliness and hygiene generally, precautions to prevent the spread of infection, and the other methods already recommended by the Department are still the best known for combating mammitis. In addition, a method of laboratory technique has been elaborated at the Wallaceville Laboratory which enables cases of what may be termed "masked" mastitis to be effectively detected. With this available, practical demonstrations have been made in the Waikato of a method of control under which the milk of each cow in an affected herd is microscopically examined, and the cows divided into three lots—(a) those free from infection; (b) those showing only slight infection; and (c) those showing well-marked infection. A milking routine is then established under which the healthy cows are milked first, and the well-marked cases last, proper sanitary precautions being taken throughout. So far as these very limited tests went, the results were very promising in that the extent of the trouble was much less than in previous years. In the coming season a larger number of herds will be put under similar treatment. This method is well worthy of the serious attention of dairy-farmers, and the Department's available resources in helping them to carry it out are at their disposal.

As regards swine, the greatest losses have been due not to disease in itself but to troubles resulting from wrong management and wrong feeding methods. A special point has been made during the year to improve swine-husbandry practice by systematical advisory and instructional methods, and some improvement is already noticeable.

Distemper in dogs is still troublesome, and the efforts made to prepare a reliable preventive vaccine have not met with the success desired. Improved methods of treatment are still being sought for.