

In the case of honey, production fell heavily, the seasonal conditions being entirely responsible. The hemp industry is still languishing, the serious drop in manufacture recorded last year having been accentuated. Efforts are being made to find fresh avenues of utilization of the products. Good work is being done at Massey College in the selection and breeding of plants from strains of proved high quality, and it may be hoped that better times are in prospect for this industry.

The production of grass and clover seeds for export has become a useful adjunct to farming practice in areas where soil and climatic conditions are suitable, and the returns therefrom for the calendar year 1931, as shown by the Customs export figures, amounted to £155,410. The practice of Government testing and certification has proved a valuable factor in building up this branch of rural industry on a good basis.

Taking the year as a whole, the Dominion has come through very well in the matter of production, considering the adverse weather conditions and the severe financial depression existing. Notwithstanding the increased bulk of lamb, mutton, and dairy-produce shipped, the policy of the Meat and Dairy Boards in regulating shipments has prevented any periods of badly glutted markets occurring, activity in getting our butter sold to a greater extent in the Midlands and North of England being of material aid in this. There is still ample room for an increased distribution of our produce in portions of Great Britain where hitherto it has not gone much into consumption, and greater activity is now being shown in seeking markets in other countries, a line of action which is most desirable.

Fuller details regarding the various classes of produce will be found in the Divisional Directors' reports appended.

#### ADVISORY AND INSTRUCTIONAL WORK.

The year has been a busy one for all Divisions through the widespread requests for advisory and instructional work. It is realized by the farming community that the essential response to low prices must be a reduction in costs of production, and the majority are rightly holding the view that improved farming practice not only will bring this about, but is also a matter within the power of the individual farmer through better knowledge and its application. It is therefore not surprising that farmers are more and more tending to lean on the Department and the agricultural colleges for guidance in those practices, both in crop and stock management, that will enable production to expand side by side with a reduced unit cost of production.

The Department, by means of its field staffs throughout New Zealand, possesses the necessary machinery whereby farmers can be kept in the closest touch with progressive development, and the close connection between the Department and the agricultural colleges enables it to function as a potent and important factor in the stimulation of primary production.

#### ANIMAL DISEASES.

The Dominion has been free from any new outbreak of disease during the year, and the efforts of the Department's staff to combat those existing have been actively continued. The most costly of these existing troubles are abortion, sterility, and mammitis of dairy-cows, and with regard to these a further advance has been made in knowledge regarding, and in methods of dealing with, them. This applies particularly to sterility and mammitis, and the staff at the Veterinary Laboratory with their associated field-research workers, Mr. Webster in Taranaki and Mr. Blake in the Waikato, deserve credit for the energetic and effective work which has been done. The extent to which bulls rendered incompetent through natural impotence, or by temporary or permanent local affections of their genital organs, are responsible for failure of conception in cows is understood to a much greater extent than heretofore, and a method under which, by the aid of the microscope, the relative fitness of a bull for efficient service can be determined has been further practised, with very promising results. Also, a method of treating cows unable to conceive through a frequently-met-with affection of the neck of the womb has been elaborated and is giving good results. Its successful application, however, demands skilful manipulation, and it is consequently beyond the ability of the dairy-farmer to carry out with exactness.

A method of controlling and gradually eliminating mammitis from a herd has been elaborated by Mr. Hopkirk, Officer in Charge at Wallaceville, and put into operation on a number of farms. It involves a preliminary microscopical examination of the milk of each cow, the milking of the cows in a set order always, and further milk examinations at intervals. The system is yet on its trial, and it is too early to state anything regarding its effectiveness. It