

EXPORTATION OF STUD STOCK.

During the year under review the following animals were exported: sheep, 3,009; cattle, 48; pigs, 14; horses, 63 draught and 10 racehorses.

There was the usual movement of thoroughbred horses to and from Australia.

POULTRY.

Conditions have on the whole operated quite favourably for poultry-keepers during the year, particularly in respect to market prices both local and export; but, unfortunately, a rather severe outbreak of fowl-pox broke out in the Auckland District during last autumn, which, in addition to taking heavy toll of the young stock, severely affected egg-production for a time. Fortunately the disease cleared up and there has not been a further recurrence. It is necessary, however, to issue a warning to poultry-keepers to be ever on the watch for any appearance of disease and to nip it in the bud in its early stages. Care should be taken to purchase only birds from absolutely healthy foundation stock.

This is all the more necessary in these days of mass production, and poultry-men cannot be too careful not only in respect to disease-free stock but also as regards the maintenance of strongly-constituted, vigorous birds, as it is only by care in this direction that it is possible to maintain healthy and heavy producing flocks.

The following extracts are taken from the report of Mr. Cussen, Chief Poultry Instructor:—

“Export.”—During the past season some 11,915 cases—357,450 doz.—of eggs were shipped to the United Kingdom as compared with 11,527 cases—345,600 doz.—shipped the previous season. This shows an increase of 11,750 doz. over the previous season’s export. Particulars of exports are as follows: Auckland, 2,610 cases, 78,300 doz.; Wellington, 191 cases, 5,730 doz.; Christchurch, 6,366 cases, 190,980 doz.; Dunedin, 2,748 cases, 82,440 doz. The increased export was due to the record shipment from Canterbury. Reports to hand indicate that the eggs arrived in good condition and were well received. Though the prospects of building up a large egg-export trade do not appear very encouraging, and our present export represents only a very small percentage of the eggs reaching the local market, yet it is most valuable in removing the surplus during the flush season.”

“Chick-sexing Examination.”—The first chick-sexing examination in this country was conducted at the Wallaceville Poultry Station on 4th November last, when fifteen students presented themselves for examination, but only three were successful in qualifying for a second-class certificate. One student sat for a first-class certificate, but he was unsuccessful. In this connection it may be mentioned that in order to obtain first-hand information as to the advantage or otherwise of sexing, arrangements were made and one hatch from a 500-egg incubator was sexed at the Department’s Wallaceville Poultry Station. The sexed pullets were reared by themselves and they made slightly better growth than a hatch of unsexed chickens reared under similar conditions. The sexed pullets are now laying, and so far no ill effects from sexing have been apparent, though Mr. Cocker reports from Canterbury that complaints were received from poultry-keepers regarding mortality in young sexed pullets due to, in his opinion, inexperienced handling by unskilled operators.”

“Chilled Eggs (Marketing) Regulations.”—Regulations governing chilled eggs were gazetted during the year, and visits of inspection to the various cool-stores showed that, generally speaking, those concerned have complied with the regulations. Some trouble, however, was experienced in Auckland where attempts were made to evade these regulations. In the circumstances, and in order to avoid future trouble, I would recommend that the regulations be amended so as to provide for the stamping of all cool-store eggs.”

“Wallaceville Poultry Station.”—The chief functions of this station are to demonstrate up-to-date methods in the management of poultry, to supply sittings of eggs, day-old chicks, and breeding stock of undoubted quality, vigour, and constitution, and to conduct experiments connected with the various branches of poultry culture. These functions have been carried out during the year. Two feeding tests with adult birds and two chicken-feeding tests were carried out, and at the present time six feeding tests are being conducted, which should be of value to producers and the industry generally.”

“Disease.”—It is regrettable to have to report that disease has been more in evidence during the past year. Last autumn an outbreak of fowl-pox was fairly widespread in the Auckland District, but this trouble was cleaned up, and no recurrence has been reported this season. Intestinal coccidiosis is assuming rather serious proportions, and some heavy losses have been experienced in the Manawatu, Foxton, Rangitikei, Wellington, and Hastings districts, and to a lesser extent in Canterbury and Auckland Provinces. Reports to hand indicate that in several instances where this trouble is being experienced the owners attribute the start of the trouble to pullets purchased from other breeders. Again, it would appear that owing to inexperience, stale ground, and breeding from inferior specimens, the vigour and constitution of the stock have been allowed to go back on many plants, with the result that the stock has not got the power of resistance against disease.”

“Instructional Staff.”—During the year Mr. H. Kitto, who for some years was Overseer at the Wallaceville Poultry Station, was appointed Poultry Instructor with headquarters at Wellington.”

WOOL.

The wool position showed considerable improvement during the season, and very good clearances were made at all sales, the percentage of passings being low.

For the four months January to April inclusive, 616,954 bales were exported as compared with 389,007 for the same period of 1935. As an indication of the increased price obtained during the 1935–36 season, the Otago wool realized on an average £14 17s. 8d. per bale as against £10 10s. 8d. for the previous season, an increase of £4 7s. per bale. The southern wool comprises more of the finer-quality wool than that of the North Island, but nevertheless these figures are indicative of the relative increase that took place throughout the Dominion.