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Here's the answer

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HERE'S THE *Answer!*

FOWL POX

Could you please advise me how to cure a disease which has affected many birds in my flock of pullets during the past two weeks? The birds were hatched in July last and commenced laying three months ago in December when they were 5½ months of age. They reached a 60 per cent. lay three weeks ago and I thought I was set for a good season but now their production has dropped to a 30 per cent. level, presumably as a result of this disease. Several birds have died and many more are looking very sick with swollen eyes and running nostrils. Some of the birds seem to breathe through their mouths and others, although they look healthy, have scabs on their combs. Second season birds in the adjoining pen are not affected.

From the information given it is clear that your pullets are suffering from "fowl pox," a virus disease which is prevalent throughout the State and which causes much financial loss to poultry keepers each year, particularly during the autumn months.

Many of the more successful poultry farmers make a practice of vaccinating each season's chickens against the disease when they are 12 weeks of age.

The vaccination is a simple operation which is performed on the thigh of the bird. Once vaccinated, the bird is given

a life-long immunity to the disease. Directions given in the leaflet which I have forwarded under separate cover outline the method of vaccination and further particulars are provided with each carton of vaccine. The vaccine, together with an applicator (a small needle) can be obtained from any Perth firm which stocks poultry requisites. Ten days after the vaccination has been carried out about 10 per cent. of the birds should be examined for "takes" at the point of vaccination on the thigh. A small swelling with usually a scab at the top indicates that the vaccination has been successful.

The old adage that "Prevention is Better than Cure" applies particularly to fowl pox, a disease which can be so devastating in its effect yet can be easily prevented by vaccination.

The information given so far has not assisted you in any way to overcome your present problem but the importance of vaccination is stressed as it is the only satisfactory means of combating this disease. It is recommended therefore, that you give serious thought to the vaccination of all chickens which you purchase in future years.

In the meantime it is suggested that you isolate the sick birds and dab tincture of iodine on the scabs on the comb, face and wattles. Two applications should be sufficient. As a result of this

treatment the scabs will dry up and fall off. The formation of these scabs on the face parts is usually the forerunner of swollen eyes and yellow cankerous material in the mouth and throat. If the scabs are treated with tincture of iodine in the early stages, the disease can sometimes be prevented from spreading to the eyes and mouth.

The difficult breathing to which you refer is no doubt caused by the presence of cankerous material down the throat and over the opening to the windpipe. This material should be removed with the aid of a hairpin or a sharpened piece of softwood and the area painted with tincture of iodine. This can be conveniently carried out by pulling a flight feather from the wing, dipping the tip of the feather into the iodine, flicking off any surplus iodine which might adhere to the feather and then painting the affected area with the iodine remaining on the feather.

Birds which are blinded should be destroyed and the remainder with eyes only slightly affected should have them treated with a 10 per cent. solution of argyrol. One drop of argyrol should be placed in each eye daily.

Birds suffering from a Vitamin A deficiency are pre-disposed to attacks by fowl pox. Also birds provided with adequate Vitamin A in their diet are likely to give a quicker response to the treatment outlined above. Should the green feed be of poor quality or be difficult to obtain, you are advised to commence feeding one of the proprietary feeding supplements rich in Vitamin A, immediately. These supplements include Vita-Oil A, Vetemul (blue label) or Ovadol. Continue feeding the supplement at the strength recommended by the manufacturer until such time as the green feed becomes adequate from the point of view of both quality and quantity.

That the second year birds are not affected is explained by the fact that having had the disease, a bird develops

a life-long immunity to it and it is possible that your second year hens were affected with the disease in a mild form last year, so mild a form perhaps that it escaped your notice, and carrier birds have passed the disease on to your pullets. Many poultry diseases are transmitted in this way and birds of widely different ages should never be housed in adjacent pens.

The disease can be carried long distances and can be transmitted from one bird to another by mosquitoes so that isolation of a poultry farm does not eliminate the necessity to vaccinate each year's chickens against this disease.

This outbreak of disease will probably prove very costly as poultry do not require very much encouragement to moult during the autumn months and consequently many of your birds can be expected to moult and cease producing eggs for 2½ to 3 months. The production has already fallen from a 60 per cent. to a 30 per cent. level and it will probably fall even lower.

CATTLE RAISING IN THE KIMBERLEYS

Would there be any chance for a man with moderate capital to establish himself in the cattle business in the Kimberleys? I would be able to maintain myself and a small staff for a year or two in the initial stages and would have £2,000 or more for the purchase of stock.

There is not much opportunity at present for an individual of comparatively small means to enter the cattle-raising industry in the Kimberleys. Practically all suitable cattle-raising country is held under lease in very large areas. The average station would be about one million acres in extent and the leases do not expire until 1982. Stocking rates under the present range conditions would be something in the order of one beast per 100 acres.

Possibly the industry will be so organised in future years that there will be scope for smaller holdings on which cattle, bred on the larger stations, might be fattened prior to delivery to the meat-works. However, there is no such land available at the present time and we cannot offer much encouragement to intending settlers in that area as yet.

There may, of course, be opportunities for an individual who knows the country and the industry to select a small area and make local arrangements with the present lessee. Even then, however, a fencing programme would present enormous difficulties in these areas.

RICE-GROWING

Could you please supply any information on the growing of rice? Have you a research station in the northern section of this State which has grown rice successfully? Is there any suitable land available that could be cleared and irrigated at moderate cost, also would the rainfall in the Kimberley area be heavy enough to grow rice without irrigation?

Cultural operations in rice growing are very similar to those employed for growing wheat, with the exception that the land must be held in a flooded condition for the greater part of the growing period. The Department of Agriculture of New South Wales could supply leaflets concerning rice cultivation should you ever get to the stage of planting a crop.

Rice is being grown on the Kimberley Research Station situated on the Ord River about 50 miles from Wyndham. Early crops have been commercial failures because the varieties available in Australia have been unsuitable for the district. We recently obtained about 250 varieties from overseas sources, however, and of these approximately 12 varieties have shown sufficient promise to warrant further research. They are now being grown in accumulation plots

and in a series of trials designed to enable us to select the varieties most likely to succeed under Kimberley conditions. It is unlikely that we will have sufficient information to discuss the possibilities of commercial rice growing until another two or three seasons have passed.

Owing to the sharp division of the Kimberley weather into the dry and wet seasons, rice-growing without irrigation is hardly likely to be successful except perhaps in a few selected areas.

A company is preparing to sow rice in the Fitzroy River district about 80 miles from Derby. These crops will be irrigated by pumping from a billabong filled by the Fitzroy River.

BEEHIVE REGISTRATION

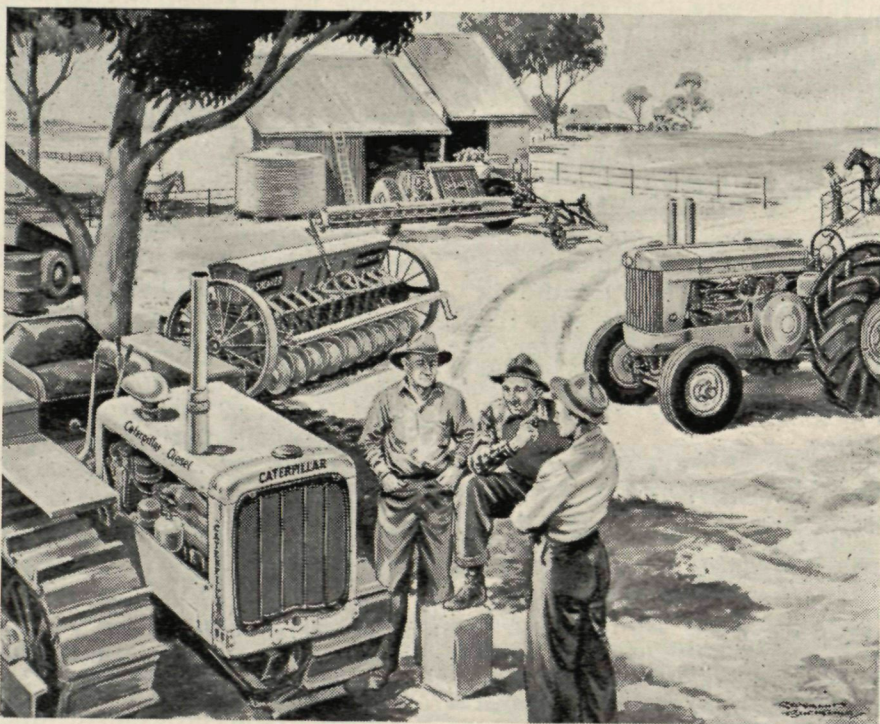
I intend to obtain a few hives of bees this season and am informed that I must pay a registration fee. What is the amount of the fee and what is the procedure for registration?

Write to the Government Apiculturist, Department of Agriculture, Adelaide Terrace, Perth, and obtain an application form for registration as a beekeeper. Fill in the form and return it with the sum of 10s.

This covers the annual registration fee of 2s. 6d. for up to 25 hives, plus 7s. 6d. for the registration of your hive brand. The 2s. 6d. is an annual charge due on December 31 of each year, but the brand registration does not require renewal.

Amendments to the Bees Act make it obligatory for a beekeeper to brand his hives and equipment. Full details of the Bees Act are given in Leaflet No. 1046 which may be obtained free of charge on application to the Department of Agriculture.

WARNING.—A number of beekeepers have not registered their hives and are liable to be prosecuted for non-compliance with the Bees Act. They are urged to complete their registration forms immediately.



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SALT TOLERANT PLANTS

I would be grateful if you could give me a list of salt-tolerant flowers, fruit trees, vegetables and shrubs. The last report on the water gave the salt content as 150 grains to the gallon.

Excessive salt in the soil or water has, generally speaking, a greater effect on annual species than on perennials. For that reason it would be wiser to plant shrubs and longlived flower species rather than attempt to work the soil to bring it into a suitable condition for the growth of annual plants. A certain amount of preparation will be necessary, however, before trees could be planted successfully.

The number of salt-tolerant species is not great but we would recommend the following trees:—Salt River gum (*Eucalyptus sargenti*); York-gum (*Eucalyptus loxophleba*); sheoak (*Casuarina lepidophloia* and *glauca*); tamarix (*Tamarix gallica*) and date palms.

Most of these trees may be obtained from the Forests Department nursery, Hamel. Other species that are tolerant of salt are the variegated bamboo (*Arundo donax*) and the numerous cultivated species of mesembryanthemum.

Fruit trees are not very tolerant of saline conditions, particularly citrus, grapevines and some of the stone fruits. The figure you quote for salt content of water is somewhat high for the satisfactory growth of fruit trees especially if the salt content of the soil is also high. If this is not the case, then systematic heavy waterings plus good drainage may enable some success to be achieved.

It is suggested that the most practical solution to your problem would be to try to grow fruits which mature early in the summer such as early peaches. These may be able to survive because their growing period ends before the onset of the driest conditions. Winter rains would tend to wash excess salt below the root zone and the maximum

salinity would not occur until the trees had completed their seasonal growth.

Vegetables.—Root types such as beet-root and mangolds are very salt-tolerant. Others which are fairly tolerant are cucumbers, melons and pumpkins, cabbages, cauliflowers, rhubarb, celery, asparagus and silver beet. Leaflet number 1009 which may be obtained free of charge from the Department of Agriculture, St. George's Terrace, Perth, gives further details of salt-tolerant plants.

BLOWFLY STRIKE

I am managing a property which in 1949 lost very large numbers of sheep through blowfly strike and although the losses were less severe last year I would be grateful for information concerning the Mules operation and other advice concerning any preparation which would protect sheep from fly strike or is suitable for the treatment of struck sheep.

A leaflet describing the Mules operation has been posted to you, and it is suggested that this work should be the basis of your campaign against the blowfly. The tailing of lambs at the recommended length, i.e., at the level of the vulva and the arrangement where possible of crutching and annual shearing to take place just in advance of the periods when waves of fly strikes are anticipated would be other suitable measures to adopt.

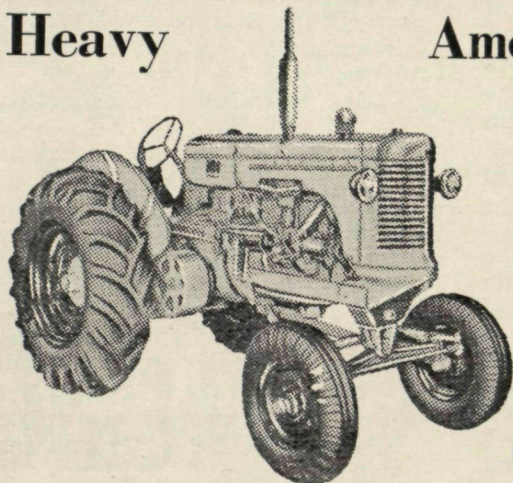
There are no blowfly dressings which can be confidently relied upon to protect sheep from fly strike for any length of time, but for the treatment of struck sheep dressings containing boric acid such as "B.K.B." may be recommended. Dressings of this type, besides destroying the maggots and promoting healing will usually prevent re-strike over a period long enough to enable the original wound to heal.

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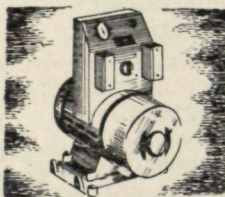
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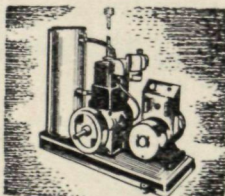
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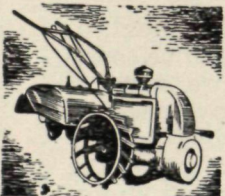
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