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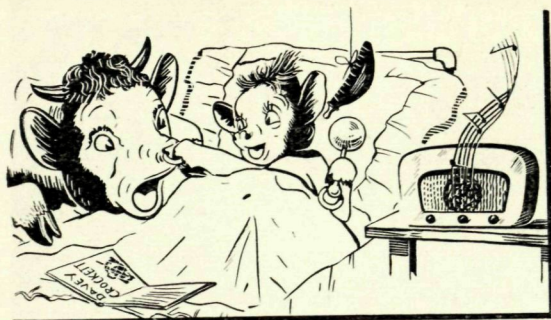
# CATTLE CORNER

By K. NEEDHAM, B.Sc. (Agric)  
Dairy Cattle Husbandry Officer.



## COSY CALVES

The calving season is here again—or just around the corner. These calves are a “headache” to most dairy farmers but as the heifers play a part in building up



the herd it is profitable to keep them comfortable. Calf troubles like the poor are always with us, but many of them can be avoided by following a few simple rules. May I suggest that you think about them now and be prepared rather than to wait for trouble to arrive.

Firstly keep the in-calf cows handy so that if calving trouble develops it becomes obvious in time for you to render assistance. Try to arrange that the calf receives colostrum for at least the first 24 hours but preferably for three days. See to it that you can then give it skim milk in clean buckets in clean dry surroundings. Calves will respond to access to grazing and at an early stage of their career they relish a nibble at good hay and a little crushed cereal grain.

For those of you in the whole milk business to whom calf rearing may present many obstacles I suggest you consider such substitutes as powdered skim milk, buttermilk, meatmeal, whalemeal, or whale solubles. Your first reaction may be that this is unprofitable but a good heifer from a good cow by a good bull is always profitable. Finally give them shelter and

try to have at least three calf paddocks available which can be rotated at weekly intervals. This will go a long way towards beating the worm menace.

## OATS FOR EARLY GRAZING

With the feed getting scarce and the silage reserves exhausted you may still feel that the time is not yet ripe to start feeding hay. Nevertheless this is the time to be thinking about the provision of that all-important early green bite for the milkers. If your calving dates have been arranged correctly—or alternatively you have been lucky at stocking time—your cows in the butterfat areas will be “coming in” during March, April and May.

It is important—and a good money-spinner—to provide a crop for early grazing. You have heard, and so have I, that if you bring a cow in at a good production level you have a chance to maintain it but if she is low at the start it is difficult to raise her production. One way to ensure a good start is to provide adequate supplies of green oats early in the season.



Many farmers who provide early green feed find that it seems to disappear equally early. I suggest for your consideration that you should not necessarily plant a dual-purpose crop—for both hay



and grazing. It would be a good practice to provide some early grazing from your cereal hay paddocks but in addition set aside a definite area which can be grazed without fear of affecting your hay estimates.

Think along the lines of sowing early—in the “dry”—and fairly heavily—say two bushels to the acre. As for a suitable variety I suggest you try Wongan.

Finally, try strip grazing it with the electric fence. You will be very agreeably surprised by the results.

### CALF MARKING

The New Year for Grade Herd Recording started on March 1—here is a New Year resolution—mark your calves. Presuming that you are practising good cattle husbandry methods then you will be in a Grade Herd Recording Unit and to obtain the maximum benefits from this scheme you should be marking your heifer calves for future identification—but unfortunately my information indicates that only a few farmers do this.

If you are culling according to production—whether on wholemilk or butterfat—you will need replacements. Calves with a tattoo in the ear have a legitimate place in any herd and when it comes to the selection of replacements guesswork is eliminated.

### MOLYBDENUM FOR ROCKMELONS.

A striking improvement in the growth of rockmelons has been obtained by a Dardanup grower as a result of using a small quantity of molybdenum as a fertiliser. Plants which were not treated have remained stunted and yellow, and the edges of the leaves have withered.

The molybdenum was used following a suggestion by a departmental officer (Mr. H. K. Gibsone), that it be tried as a means of overcoming unsatisfactory growth.

A molybdenum deficiency of rockmelons has not been previously recorded in this State, and it is believed that in view of the remarkable response obtained, this observation may be of considerable value to growers in the South-West.

The Director of Agriculture (Mr. G. K. Baron Hay), emphasises that at this stage no general recommendation for the use of molybdenum fertiliser for this crop is made, but suggests that when rockmelon plants remain unthrifty for no apparent reason, growers might well approach the local agricultural adviser with a view to arranging a suitable trial with molybdenum.

Now that an Artificial Breeding Scheme is in operation it is even more important to identify the heifer calves and furthermore it will help us with Sire Surveys and progeny testing schemes.

These comments apply also to persons whose herds are not under test because you also no doubt will be following a programme of grading-up. The procedure is not difficult and can be applied successfully, earmarking the animals with light-coloured ears. Other breeds will need a firebrand or ear-punch system. If you are



in a Grade Herd Recording Unit your recorder will be happy to assist with marking at each visit. With his help the task will be lightened considerably. So make sure it is done regularly.

### RABBIT CONTROL

Reports from country areas indicate that many farmers are not taking advantage of the widespread outbreaks of myxomatosis which have occurred recently. Even though the rabbit population may be greatly reduced, every effort should be made to deal with the survivors by poisoning and warren ripping.

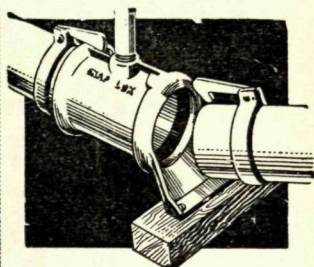
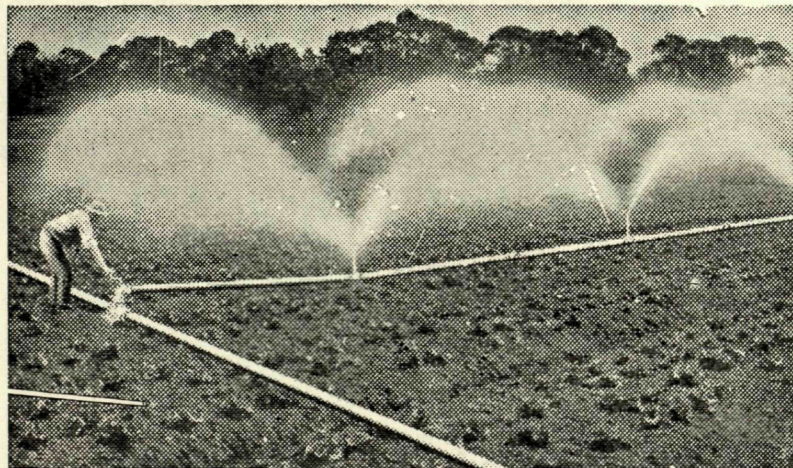
It has been shown fairly clearly in the Eastern States that the residual population will contain a percentage of resistant and recovered rabbits. If these are destroyed, the eventual build-up in resistance to myxomatosis will be greatly retarded. Even if no rabbits appear to be present, all warrens should be destroyed to prevent recolonising.

The spreads of myxomatosis extend along the southern coast from Esperance to Manjimup and north to Northampton. They cover most of the agricultural areas and there are few districts from which reports have not been received. The outbreaks are not spectacular, and there are big gaps between them. However, thousands of rabbits are being killed. Spreads are typical following the exceptional winter experienced.



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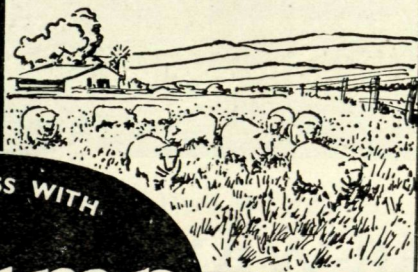


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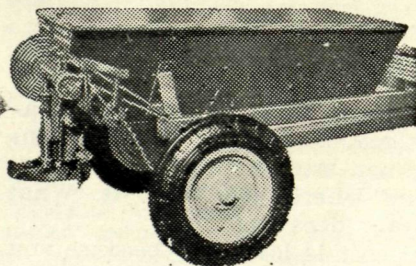
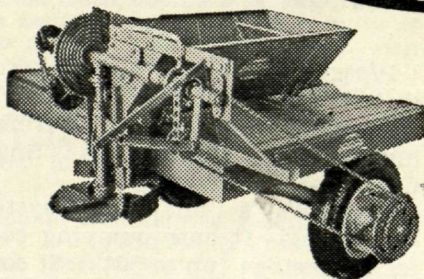
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