

C.S.

LIVE STOCK.

SHEEP.

193 5.

No. 235/35.

H.E. The Governor.

SUBJECT.

193

Rate.

NOTE ON THE HIGH MORTALITY OF SHEEP IN
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Previous Paper.

MINUTES.

Minute from His Excellency the Governor. 17/8/35.

1-10
 (11) Romeo copy of Note on mortality of sheep
 in the Falkland Is.

J.H. Submits. 10 spare copies
 of the Note put up for J.H.
 The Note will be circulated
 to all farmers with a covering
 letter.

mcH
es.

22.8.35

Thankyou. Spare copies
 withdrawn

[Signature] 28/8/35

Subsequent Paper.

Circular letters to all Farmers of 23/8/35.

(15)

pp

Letter from H.C. Harding Esq. 16/9/35

(16-77)

Submitted. Regarding the matter of labour it would seem that the fault is not altogether on the side of the men. Mr. Harding was particular in wanting good shearers and these are not easy to get. He could have got other men, in fact one man came to this office and said he would like to go to Kiri Cove. I telegraphed applicant's name to Mr. Harding but received no reply.

M.C.H.
Ct.

23.9.35

That is so. Will you please thank him for his valuable contribution to the consideration of this important subject

Will

24/9/35

C.S.O. No. 235/35

Inside Minute Paper.

Sheet No. 1

18. Letter to H.C. Harding, Esq., of 24/9/35.

PH

(19) Letter from Mr C.H. Robertson 16/9/35
(20-21) Letter from Mr S. Miles (Jr) 19/9/35

Yr. Submitted. Roy Cove has an advantage which few other farms have, namely that it is nearly all good ground hence the low rate of mortality.

MCH
ES.

30.9.35

Quite so. It is a stupid letter as the circular obviously applied only to those stations with a high mortality rate. I think that it had better be acknowledged saying that his comments are considered as superfluous as though the circular had as a routine matter to be sent to all stations it should have been obvious that it was not of application to the best farms

30/9/35

Letter to Sidney Miller, Esq., 30/9/35.

(22)

P.A.
1/10/35

Letter from J. H. Bonner Esq 1/10/35

(23)

Submitted. The reply regarding
the third para: would be similar
to that sent to the Manager,
Ray Lane Stn.

MCH
CL.

29. X. 55

Yes I do not have, and "best from"
but from a which the probability is very
low. Thank L from acc.

29/10

Letter to J. H. Bonner, Esq, San Carlos, of 1/11/35.

(24)

P.A.
1/11/35

Letter from S. Miller (S) 2/11/35

(25)

— — — — J. Hansen of 17/9/35.

(26)

y/h.

The original letter from
Mr. Meis is in 151/35. He
does not appear to have read
concerning the letter sent to him.

mch
cs.
8. XI. 35

~~TTTT~~ 5/XI

✓ p. a.
mch

(7) Letter from Mr. J. Hamilton 27/12/35

y/h. Submitted together with
photographs.

mch
cs.
10. 2. 36

Thank you. Will you please
acknowledge saying that I have
read his letter & seen the photographs
with great interest and that I hope
to visit Weddell at an early date &
see the improvements there of which I
have heard much

TTTT 4/3/36

Letter to J. Hamilton, Esq., of 5/3/36.

(28)

P.A. MCH

Letter from J. Hamilton, Esq. of 11/4/36.

(29)

Y.E. Submitted. (30)

Rec'd
7/7/36

31/7

D/A

(31)

File to you as requested

J.B.
for C.S.
29.4.46.

P.A.
14/8/36.

D.A. MCH

I.e. names for
me be P.A. A.B.
27-9

6

| | A. | B. | C. | D. | E. | F. | G. |
|-------|-----------|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---------------------|
| | Put Cut. | Hoggets follow- ing year. | Add 7% loss between mark- ing & dipping. | Deduct sheep dis- posed of during year. | Remaining to be put out if no mortality. | Number put out follow- ing year. | Unaccounted for. |
| 1923. | 634,856 | 143,516 | 155,562. | 35,203 | 733,107 | 631,360 | 121,747 |
| 1924. | 631,360 | 117,357 | 125,572 | 74,372 | 682,560 | 605,675 | 76,885 |
| 1925. | 605,675 | 117,996 | 126,254 | 57,374 | 674,555 | 606,521 | 68,034 |
| 1926. | 606,521 | 128,643 | 137,648 | 35,471 | 708,698 | 631,405 | 77,293 |
| 1927. | 631,405 | 135,805 | 145,311 | 59,595 | 717,121 | 613,052 | 104,069 |
| 1928. | 613,052 | 125,102 | 133,859 | 56,682 | 680,229 | 606,882 | 73,347 |
| 1929. | 606,882 | 131,731 | 140,952 | 55,193 | 692,636 | 608,914 | 83,722 |
| 1930. | 608,914 | 128,204 | 137,173 | 59,289 | 686,803 | 615,767 | 71,036 |
| 1931. | 615,767 | 131,151 | 140,332 | 53,033 | 703,066 | 614,976 | 88,090 |
| 1932. | 614,976 | 131,731 | 140,952 | 69,907 | 686,021 | 607,291 | 78,730 |
| Total | 6,169,410 | 1,291,236 | 1,381,620 | 553,124 | 6,934,796 | 6,141,843 | 842,953 |

Note. As some 6,047 sheep have been imported during the above period, that number should be added to the totals in columns E and G making the total loss 849,000.

9

N O T E.

The attention of all sheep owners should be very forcibly drawn to the very high mortality among sheep in the Colony and the general absence of well sustained efforts on their part, with one or two very creditable exceptions, to improvement in the camp by draining, bridging and opening of ditches to reduce the enormous losses that occur annually.

On the ground of humanity alone there would be no difficulty in urging those responsible for the sheep industry to take all feasible steps to protect their flocks from death by neglect. In a petition addressed to the Secretary of State a few years ago the following words were used with reference to the mortality on one of the farms "The sheep died a slow death from starvation, lying on their backs and sides unable to get to their feet without attention. Gulls, hawks and other birds take out the eyes, tongues and entrails of sheep lying helpless." It cannot be said that this picture is exaggerated.

Apart from this, however, it is urged strongly that economic reasons demand in the interests of the farmers and the Colony that intensive efforts be made to deal with the evil to the full extent to which conditions are capable of improvement.

The Government is doing all that lies in its power for the improvement of pastures by seeking for a free grant of £20,000 from the Imperial Government for research and experimental work to this end. It is only right and proper that in their turn farmers should devote funds to the purpose of bettering camp conditions for the sheep.

A table which is annexed has been prepared to show from the official returns supplied by farmers the actual extent of the mortality among sheep over the period of ten years from 1923 to 1932 inclusive . The number "unaccounted

for" is shewn at 842953 during this time. In other words
X nearly 85000 some 84300 sheep are lost annually, or over one million
X sheep every twelve years. The average annual death rate
is 13.70%.

Now all farmers ascribe their main losses to ditches. To this may be added bad or inadequate shepherding and this not least to shepherds receiving insufficient supervision and being frequently taken away from their flocks for other duties. On one farm where the death rate was previously 13 and 14 per cent the farm manager has been able by hard work and constant supervision of his shepherds to reduce this figure in a few years to but little over 7%. There is no apparent reason why the general death rate should not be brought down to one half of what it is now.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to challenge the statement that those persons responsible for the maintenance of the sheep industry who consistently neglect their pastures and staff their farms inadequately are harmful to public as well as private interests, and this note is written in the hope that it may not be found necessary to consider other measures for dealing with the situation.

An analysis of preventible losses which may be taken as not less than six to seven per cent of the present general death rate suggests that it would be sound economy for for a special branch of the work on every farm to consist of an annual programme of draining, ditching and causing improvement generally by labour specially employed for this work. It is admitted that such improvement can best be carried out during the "season", that is to say at a time when all hands now usually carried are fully engaged in other essential work.

If as is suggested 42,500 sheep could be saved every year the net saving would amount to £17000 taking the value of a sheep as 8/-. There can be no dispute that by clearing ditches and draining the mortality would be very greatly

/reduced

reduced. The standard payment for such work is 1d a yard and twenty-five miles could be covered in a season by two men working together at a cost including bridging of not more than £10 a mile. As the mortality loss on a farm carrying 25,000 sheep is at least £1000 a year it cannot be said that too great a demand is made on the farming community, if they are pressed to give serious consideration to the adoption of an annual camp improvement programme and the employment of additional labour for that purpose.

At a time when there is considerable unemployment in the Colony which is largely due to labour imported to work on the farms it is particularly incumbent on sheep owners to offer employment for work of economic value.

H.C.

Will you please have
 attached note typed for
 a circular to all stations
 subject to any additions
 or corrections you deem
 desirable

W.H. 17/5/55

~~It is sufficient for the purpose~~

About 60 copies required

J.H. Typed draft herewith
I consider this brings
to the notice of the
farmer very forcibly the
high death rate of stock
through ditches and
bad shepherding.

mch

20.8.55

H.C.S.

I have made his attention
a page 2 and added a footnote
to the table for typing in.
I wish all farm managers to have
a copy and extra copies made for
my use please ~~return~~ 20/8

235/35.

23rd August, 35.

Sir,

I am directed by the Governor to transmit for your information the accompanying copy of a note on the high mortality rate of sheep in the Colony.

I am,

Sir,

Your Obedient servant,

MCH,
Colonial Secretary.

The Manager,
Darwin Harbour,
East Falkland.

For Addressees see over,

September 10th. 1937.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of August 3rd accompanied by note on the high mortality rate of sheep in the Colony.

While certainly agreeing that the mortality rate is high I venture to make the following remarks :-

1. Sheep only get down on their backs badly at a certain period of the year, namely from the beginning of October to the time they are brought in to be shorn.

From the 1st October to the 15th November - the lambing season - it is usual on the majority of farms to put extra men out shepherding. From the 15th November up to the time the various flocks come in for shearing at least 2 farms on the West, including ourselves, leave shepherds out in the camp until such time as the flocks they are looking after come to the shed.

I cannot say that this is a general practice on most stations, as some farmers maintain that their sheep do not cast badly and to leave their shepherds out in the camp during shearing would not be economical.

It is certainly a fact that the nature of the ground has a lot to do with sheep casting and on wet high camps they do not get down so badly as on hard low camps.

2. Personally I should not ascribe the main losses to bad ditches but would say it is more or less evenly distributed among the following causes :-

Weather conditions, bad ditches, old and poor sheep put out in April which should be culled, lambs marked in large cuts and in old lamb marking pens, casting, and no doubt in some cases bad and inadequate shepherding.

Average losses on this farm for the last three years which might be of interest are as follows :-.

Loss on all stock from April 1st - March 31st (one year) between 10 and 11 per cent.

Loss in lambs between lamb marking and dipping - 10 per cent.

Loss in wethers between dipping and shearing i.e. winter and spring loss - 8 per cent.

Loss in hoggets ditto - 8 per cent.

Loss in breeding ewes ditto - 10 per cent.

Loss on all stock ditto - 8 per cent.

It is hoped to reduce the loss in lambs between lamb marking and dipping by moving old lamb marking pens, fencing off the ewe camps into smaller blocks, and also by ditching, and work on these lines has already been commenced.

3. An annual programme of ditching and draining on all farms would certainly be sound economy but it would appear rather doubtful whether it will help to solve the unemployment problem.

Six men have recently refused to come here to do ordinary farm work and if they will not do this I do not suppose they would be agreeable to live out in a tent for 3 or 4 months and work continually at ditching and draining.

Men ditching on contract at 1d per yard should be able to make from 17/- to 20/- per day, living in a tent and paying for their own food, ration of course being provided free.

Generally speaking this is a little less than men usually make at contract fencing and a little more than on contract peat cutting.

Nearly all the ditching that has been done in the Colony in the past has been at the rate of 1d per yard and wages.

4. The one and only reason why labour has been imported into the Colony is the refusal of men to leave Stanley to work in the camp. When I first went to North Arm in 1923 I found it impossible to get local men to come there and in consequence the Company imported 8 labourers from England. Three of these have married and settled down in the Colony and the remaining five have returned to England.

I am,

The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary.

Sir,

Your obedient servant, H. C. Harding

235/35.

24th September,

35.

Sir,

Red 17

I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 10th of September, 1935, and to thank you for your valuable contribution to the consideration of the important subject of the high mortality among sheep in the Colony.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

McH

Colonial Secretary.

H.C. Harding, Esq.,
Hill Cove,
West Falkland.

1911

Port Stephens Station
West Falkland Islands.

18th September 1935

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter
235/35 23rd Aug. 1935 and also the booklet re. improvement
of grassland for which I am very grateful.

I am ,

Yours faithfully

Charles H Robertson

The Hon. Colonial Secretary,
Stanley.

Ref, 235/35.

● Aug. 23rd, 1935.

(21)
Roy Cove,
Falkland Islands.

Sept. 19th, 1935.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Aug. 23rd and its accompanying circular concerning high sheep mortality in this Colony.

With reference to this circular it would be interesting to discover the source of some of the statements as set down by the author. No doubt there may be some farms in this colony concerning which the circular does not overstate but to managers of well run farms it reads as a mis-representation of facts giving an incorrect appearance to any person not in close touch with the sheepfarming industry.

I take this opportunity to state a few facts and figures concerning Westbourne Station (Roy Cove) during the last two years.

TOTAL annual percentage loss; including lamb mortality between marking and dipping, also all other causes of mortality:-

Season 1933-34..... 4.96 %

" 1934-35..... 5.9 %

Since I took over this farm in Sept./33, over 7,000 yards of ~~dishing~~ ditching, and just over 10 miles of subdivision fencing have been paid for and I have a further eight miles of fencing on order. In consideration of these facts, which are

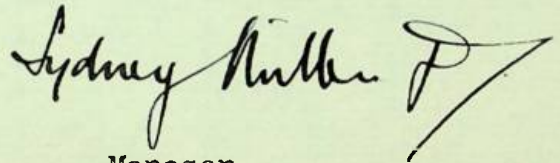
available in my stock books for verification, I can only regret the apparent veiled threat contained in paragraph 3 of page 2 of the circular.

I would further point out that the improvements just mentioned have been carried out at no small expense with wool markets still maintaining a low level.

My personal opinion as an employer of labour in the Colony is that the men at present out of work in Stanley are for the most part both incapable and unwilling to work in the camp.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,



Manager,
Estate Bertrand & Felton
Roy Cove.

The Hon. Colonial Secretary,

STANLEY.

235/35.

30th September,

35.

Sir,

Red 21.

I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 19th of September, 1935, and to say that your comments are considered as superfluous as though the Circular had as a routine matter to be sent to all Stations it should have been obvious that it was not of application to the best farms.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

McH

Colonial Secretary.

Sydney Miller, Esq.,
Roy Cove,
WEST FALKLAND.

83

SAN CARLOS,

FALKLAND ISLANDS,

GEORGE BONNER.

The Hon. The Colonial Secretary.

.....2nd October.....19 35.

Colonial Secretary's Office.

Stanley.

Sir,

I have to acknowledge your letter of Aug.23rd, No.235/35, with accompanying note on the high mortality rate of sheep in the Colony.

With reference to the latter I beg to advise you that for the last three years the average annual mortality rate on this Station amounts to 7.27 %, and the death rate has been on a steady decline for the last ten years, culminating this last season with the extremely low mortality of 5.73 %.

I presume therefore that the remarks contained in your ~~letter~~ note do not apply to the station of which I am Manager.

Until better general methods in sheep farming are practised throughout the Colony and, in particular, greater attention paid to "culling" and systematic "weeding out" of old stock, I question the statement that the annual mortality could be halved by ditching alone.

My personal belief is - that it is the lack of an outlet for surplus stock which leads to much bad farming being practised.

If there was a reasonable market for Cast sheep it would encourage farmers to get rid of old stock which are kept at present, and there would be a decrease in the annual mortality at once.

This farm disposes of 3500 to 5000 head annually, and if there is no market they are "killed for skins". To this systematic "culling" we attribute our low death rate, but naturally we greatly desire a more profitable outlet for surplus than what is usually obtainable, and I am convinced it would be of enormous benefit to the local Sheep Industry in general.

For and on behalf of

MESSRS. GEORGE BONNER

I have the honour to be Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. J. Bonner Manager.

255/35.

1st November,

35.

Sir,

I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge and to thank you for your letter dated the 2nd of October, 1935, and to state that though the Circular referred to had as a routine matter to be sent to all Stations it is obvious that it was not of application to farms on which the mortality is very low.

Red 23.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

McH

Colonial Secretary.

J. F. Bonner, Esq.,
San Carlos,
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

15

Roy Cove,
West Falklands.

Nov. 2nd, 1935.

Sir,

251/35

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of August 21st and to thank you for the Agricultural booklet contained therein.

235/35

98/35

My letter of 19th September was written in an intentional spirit of help and I regret the wording of your 235/35 of 30th September; on account of this I acknowledge receipt of your other circular concerning sale of stores (M.P. 98/35) and refrain from comment lest my information again be "superfluous".

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) Sydney Miller, Jnr.,

Manager,

Estate Bertrand & Felton.

The Hon. Colonial Secretary,

STANLEY.

Caracas Island
Sept 14th 1935

The Hon.

The Colonial Secretary

Sir,

Thanks you for circular
relating to the mortality among sheep also for
the book Improvement of Grass Land.

I am

Sir

Your Obedient Servant
Jensen Hansen

7

Punta Loyola

The Honourable,

RIO GALEGOS.

The Colonial Secretary,

ARGENTINA.

PORT STANLEY.

27th December 1935.

FAKLAND ISLANDS.

Dear Sir, I think it right that special attention be paid to His Excellency the Governor's note with regard to the better working of sheep and farms in the Colony. It is a matter of common knowledge, that great and increasing losses are brought about, by sheep dying on their backs, by drowning in ditches, and bad streams where no bridges are available for the sheep crossing, in particular, when released from shearing and dipping.

It is also well known that bridging is an urgent need on many farms. In fact over a year ago a considerable number of long poles of 20 feet in length were obtained from the Western channels of special wood for bridges on Weddell, but shortly after being landed, the whole consignment was accidentally destroyed by fire. I put this example on record to show the set backs we commonly experience on Islands and other isolated places.

The Falkland farmer has to face an exceptionally hard climate almost too severe for sheep. Continual rain for long periods does great harm to stock much more than is generally known. It is not only that the sheep has to lie on wet ground at night; but the fleece becomes saturated and remains in that state for a long time. Lambs die by the score when lambed on cold wet ground; every shepherd is familiar with this feature of farming.

A number of years ago sheep farming was tried unsuccessfully in the Western channels as far north as Chiloe. Many thousands of pounds were invested by the Limited Companies concerned; but all to no purpose. The sheep imported from Magallanes all died after a time. The farms were abandoned eventually, and the men in charge returned to Punta Arenas - one of them brought a very practical scotch shepherd from the Falklands. The enterprise failed; it will be asked Why? Because the climate was too wet for sheep, and the abundant coarse grass entirely unsuitable for almost any animal. This speaks for itself, and may well be borne in mind by the Falkland farmer, who persists in over stocking, to the detriment of the whole Colony. Too many sheep on the land means less wool not more? Grass land while "spelling" on Weddell Island takes years to recover; the reaction is incredibly slow. The first year's growth being barely visible, scedless, and weak. Lightness in stocking must be followed for several years after the "spelling" process is completed, to the satisfaction of the owner. For this knowledge we must thank Nature, still, the best schoolmaster in the Colony; for people employed in the Camp.

While resident on Weddell for a year, I had the opportunity of seeing a number of old account books describing the quantity of tallow exported at the time a Graseria was there; the weight of tallow per sheep, as well as those bought from other Islands. It was a revelation at the time. Nothing more was needed to prove the wanton destruction by overstocking, and its continuance for 30 years. The boiling down Plant on Weddell was sold for an old song and, I think still exists, at Rio Verde, Magallanes; where it was profitably employed for many years.

I am to enclose a few photo's to show His Excellency the Governor a very small portion of our work amidst ~~work~~ and difficulties on Beaver and Weddell. Tussock plantations building, fencing and gorge work cannot be seen. I have the honour, to be, Your Obedt. Servant *John D. ...*

255/55.

5th March,

56.

Sir,

Red 27

I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 27th of December, 1935, and to say that His Excellency has read your letter and seen the photographs which accompanied it with great interest.

2. I am to add that His Excellency hopes to visit Weddell Island at an early date to see the improvements there of which His Excellency has heard much.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

MCH

Colonial Secretary.

J. Hamilton, Esq.,
Punta Loyola,
Rio Gallegos,
ARGENTINA.



1st Passage Log. Sentiment
2nd " " also with
house & shed, recently
completed. Pick Pine & c
and yards under
construction.

FROM:

Wool & Sheep
CS/235/35

Note on the
High Mortality
to the sheep in
the Falkland Is.
1935-1936.

CARTOLINA POSTALE

Punta Loyola

RIO GALLEGOS.

ARGENTINA.

11th APRIL 1936.

The Honourable,

The Colonial Secretary,

Port Stanley,

FAULKLAND ISLANDS.

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 5th March, and to thank you very kindly for same, along with the enclosed photographs: of work partly carried out on the Islands, adjoining the Weddell and Beaver Island properties.

It gives me much pleasure to hear that His Excellency the Governor intends paying the Islands a visit. The improvements are as a matter of fact much exaggerated; mainly by the people employed in planting and other work. Our great help was the "Penelope" and the "Weddell" without these useful little crafts to bring plants and supply accommodation to the men, our work would not have availed very much. I was ill served by some of the workers, and being from the Coast was a difficulty, but on the whole the majority of the men served me very well, and I cannot complain of them. We should make a large allowance for the isolated life on these Islands with no town or village to visit during the long winter months, when money is plentiful and time hangs heavily on their hands.

I hope his Excellency the Governor as well as your good self are in the enjoyment of good health, and that everything goes well in Stanley, and the more distant parts of the Colony.

I am,

Yours faithfully.

