GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.
LIVE STOCK BRANCH.

BLACKLEG

ITS NATURE, CAUSE AND PREVENTION.

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NAME, HISTORY AND DISTRIBUTION.

Blackleg is an infectious disease of cattle and although sheep and goats also contract the disease spontaneously, the outbreaks among these latter animals are extremely rare.

Blackleg is also known as black-quarter, quarter-ill and symptomatic anthrax.

Blackleg is known all over the civilised world and the annual losses from this scourge are enormous. It is known all over Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and its ravages in some districts have caused losses as high as 20 per cent. of the young cattle. Climate, location, weather conditions and seasons seem to have little or no effect upon it.

INFLUENCE OF CLASS, BREED, SEX, AGE, CONDITION, ETC.

Blackleg is primarily a bovine disease and statistics show that no one breed of cattle is less susceptible to its attack than another.

Sex has little or no influence on the disease. It seems to attack both males and females alike, up to a certain age.

As a general rule cattle from six months to three years of age are the most commonly affected, and animals seem to exhibit the least resistance between the ages of six and eighteen months. The disease may occur, however, at practically any age, but is extremely rare after the animal has attained the age of three years. Calves under six months have also been known to contract blackleg, but the occurrence is not common.

CAUSE AND METHOD OF INFECTION.

Blackleg, as has been stated, is the product of a parasitic vegetable organism known as Bacillus Chauveii. Without the presence of this germ the disease *cannot occur*. The germ may be present in the soil, feed (grains or grasses), or water. Thus the disease may occur in the stable as well as in the field.

The blackleg bacillus usually gains entrance through abrasions in the skin and in some cases through the mucous membrane of the mouth. Any small punctured wound, seems to be the most common point of infection and correspond most closely to the only means by which the disease can be produced artificially, namely, by subcutaneous injection of the virus, either in fluid, pellet or filament form.

Owing to the fact that the blackleg bacillus develops only in the absence of oxygen, large wounds to which air gains free entrance are not regarded as a serious medium of infection.