

"Gangrenous Ergotism: In this common form, the checking of the blood, resulting from the contraction of the small blood vessels, causes a loss of a part or of all the limb below the knee or hock, of the tail or the ears. The form of the disease may manifest itself by the formation of ulcers at the top of the hoof or between the toes, and a toe may be lost or the entire hoof shed. The affected part dries, a small furrow or line of separation appears, completely surrounding the limb, dividing the living from the dead mummified tissue."

We are indebted to the Veterinary Director-General at Ottawa for the following reports of recent ergot poisoning in Alberta presented by one of his inspectors, Dr. W. H. McKenzie:—

January 4, 1915.—I have inspected ninety head of cattle, twelve of which were suffering from ergotism. Necrosis of the inferior third of the tail, about one inch of the superior extremity of the ear, and both hind feet, was observed in one animal. In two others, both hind feet had sloughed off at the pastern joint, in another an indented ring circumscribing the hind leg about six inches above the fetlock joint, below which the tissue was gangrenous, in three one claw was absent. The other visibly affected animals exhibited swellings and lameness in one or both hind fetlocks. Animals had access to stacks of rye straw since about the first of November. Owner advises that first symptoms were observed on or about the first of December."

Five animals had already succumbed to the effects of the poison before the inspection of Dr. McKenzie. Receiving information of a similar case in the same neighbourhood, Dr. McKenzie inspected thirty-four cattle.

"Six animals were found to be showing the effects of this poison, being lame, having enlarged fetlock joints, and showing a pronounced tendency to resume the recumbent position. The grain bins and rye stack were examined and a considerable quantity of ergot found. The animals in question had been fed on rye straw for about four weeks, and a slight lameness was first observed ten days ago. I was informed that a neighbour who fed rye to pregnant sows had 28 abortions. All rye straw was burned, and owner instructed to thoroughly clean the rye grain before feeding same."

REMEDY AND MEANS OF CONTROL: In the case of ergot poisoning the best remedies are preventive. Care should be taken that no ergotised grain is sown. All grasses bearing ergot, wherever seen, should be cut and burnt. During the flowering season, there should be a vigilant search for heads showing the glistening honeydew. These infected heads should be gathered at once, taking care not to brush them against other grasses. Remember one drop of honeydew contains enough conidia to infect a whole acre of rye. Burn all ergotised hay, and clean thoroughly all barns and stalls where it has been stored. Should animals show symptoms of poisoning, their food should be changed at once, and the assistance of a veterinary surgeon should be procured.