

WARTS ON CATTLE.

By C. C. Marr.

Warts on cattle, particularly calves, are of common occurrence in the Territory. They are found on many parts of the body, but their location depends somewhat on the age of the animal.

In cows, warts usually occur on the udder or teats, and from these positions are spread to various parts of the head, neck and shoulders of suckling calves. These warty patches may spread from the original location to various parts of the body.

Cause of Warts.

It has been proved beyond doubt that warts in cattle are infectious, the infective constituent being a filterable virus. By experimental skin inoculation with warty material, growths have been produced in healthy cattle under one year of age. Under ordinary circumstances infection is thought to take place through injuries to the skin, when the injured part comes into contact with warty animals, fences, buildings, rubbing posts or any structure with which an infected animal has come in contact.

Prevention and Cure.

- (1) Separate all warty animals from the herd.
- (2) Clean and disinfect all rubbing posts, dip-yards, fences and camping grounds.
- (3) Cows with warts on their teats or udder should be milked last, and the milkers should be careful to wash and disinfect their hands thoroughly after each milking, to prevent the possible spread of the virus from one animal to another.

In small herds of cattle, more particularly stud cattle, where individual attention is necessary, warts when first observed may be removed as follows without a great deal of trouble:--

If the wart at the place of attachment is small, either clipping with sterilized scissors or tying of a slender cord or sterile thread tightly round the base of the wart. In the latter case warts should slough off in a few days, after which the stumps of the warts should be touched with either glacial acetic acid, tinc. iodine, or silver nitrate. The layman should not attempt the removal of abnormally large warts, but should have them removed by a veterinary surgeon.

In this territory where periodical dipping for cattle tick is the common practice, it is very little trouble to inspect each animal closely as it goes through the race, and separate from the main herd any animals showing signs of wart infestation.

Thus, before warts become excessively large they may be removed by daily application of glacial acetic acid or tinc. iodine. When applying acetic acid be sure and grease all surrounding parts of the skin with vaseline or lard, &c., but be careful not to grease warts, as this would protect them also from the acid.

Small warts on the teats and udders of cows will often disappear if kept soft by daily application of castor oil.

If the presence of warts on an animal is so extensive as to render the above methods impracticable, it would be advisable to kill off badly affected animals, when the meat could be used for rationing labour. But if this is done, care should be taken to destroy by fire all warty infected skin surfaces.

Warts may occasionally disappear without treatment of any kind, especially as the animals become older. Most cases, however, require definite and systematic treatment.

Damage Done by Warts.

When warts become large and pendulous they are inclined to sap the strength of the cattle, and thus hinder the growth to a certain extent in young animals, but the main damage is observed in calf skins and cattle hides after tanning.

The tanned hides have roughened and weak spots where the warts occurred on the skin, and frequently contain numerous pits and holes in places, such as at the shoulders, where the wart infection is usually greatest. The parts affected are thus considered worthless, and if such skins are offered for sale on the market, drastic reductions are made.

Cattle buyers, also, in the world markets make discounts for warty animals purchased.
