CANNON BONES

SOME DIMENSIONS, HERITABILITIES

AND

RELATIONSHIPS TO CARCASS QUALITY

IN

ROMNEY WETHER LAMBS

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the

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by

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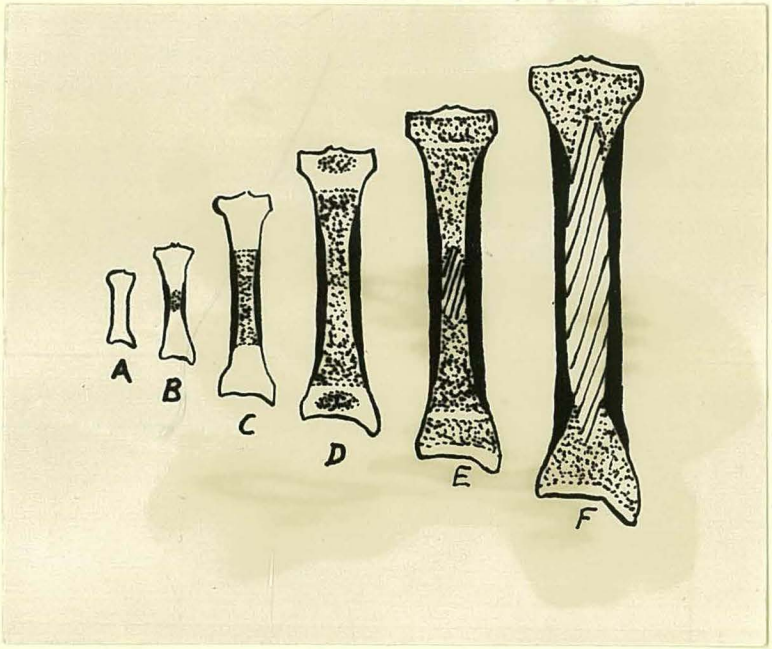
INTRODUCTION

In the past and to a certain extent at the present time sheep breeders have paid considerable attention to the dimensions of the cannon bones of their animals in the belief that this bone serves as a good indicator of the quality of the conformation and constitution of their animals. Scientific workers interested in meat and carcass quality have also attached considerable importance to the cannon bone as an index of carcass composition and hence of carcass quality.

The origin of the sheep breeders beliefs is no doubt due to years of farmer observation supported to some extent by the findings of the scientific workers, who of necessity, using relatively small numbers of animals, have established relationships between the dimensions of the cannon bone and other characters of economic importance.

The existence at Massey Agricultural College of complete records, concerning cannon bone dimensions and carcass quality, collected from a relatively large number of animals, prompted this present study which was intended to yield more accurate results than those previously reported. At the same time this study was designed to yield estimates of the heritability of cannon bone dimensions and their relationship to carcass quality thus providing a basis on which breeders might decide whether or not they would continue to place the present amount of emphasis on the cannon bone in their selection practices.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