



DWARFISM OF THE 'SNORTER' variety is easily recognized. The animal is not only stunted, but has an undershot jaw, crooked rear legs and is often "pot-bellied." This

dwarf was one exhibited by the Pennsylvania State University at the recent Livestock Exposition. (LF Photo)

X-Rays Seem Best

Clearer Understanding of Dwarfism Helping Find Carrier Animals

A clearer understanding of cattle dwarfism—one of the most misunderstood and feared problems of the industry—is shaping up with increased research by USDA, State experiment stations, and breeders.

There are several different types of dwarfs. The type known as the snorter—so called because the animal breathes heavily—is probably most common and trouble some. These animals, also known as shorthaired or brachycephalic dwarfs, are thick, potbellied, and shortlegged, with bulging foreheads, undershot lower jaws, and protruding tongues. Such dwarfs can usually be recognized at birth or within three or four weeks.

Carriers of the dwarf gene, however, aren't easy to identify since they look normal. Most current research is aimed at finding a simple, accurate method of get-

ting rid of dwarfism by identifying these carriers at a young age. This eliminates expensive and time-consuming breeding tests later.

Early detection also helps decide which animals should go into the feedlot and which should be saved for breeding. X-raying of calves' vertebrae appears most promising.

Research so far points to the X-ray method as the most promising of several physical and chemical methods under study. The lumbar (loin) vertebrae of many carriers' spines show characteristic abnormalities that can be recognized in X-rays of calves less than 10 days old. Pictures must be taken when

animals are young because it's difficult to get clear X-rays of older animals. Also, the telltale spinal defects that help identify carriers

(Continued on page 13)

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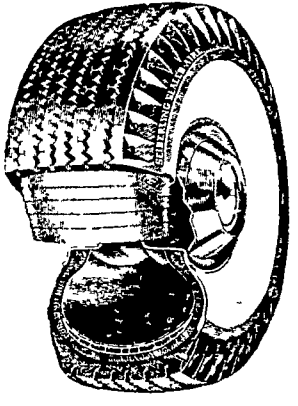
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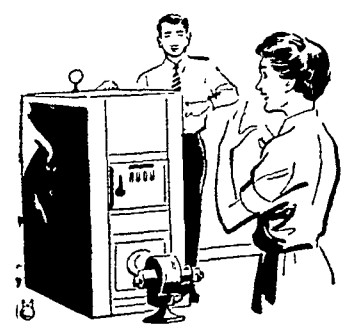
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