

Meat Animal Evaluation Center Termed Beneficial

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The Center, which began operations in January 1967, runs controlled feeding and growth tests as well as carcass evaluations on beef, sheep, and swine.

Constructed and operated with funds provided by the State Legislature, the facility is under the direction of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the College of Agriculture at The Pennsylvania State University. It is located at the University.

Leading the second anniversary tour were State Secretary of Agriculture Leland H. Bull, Pennsylvania's Meat Animal Evaluation Center was termed "very beneficial to livestockmen and consumers" by state agricultural leaders who inspected the operations during a recent tour.

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der controlled feeding and management systems until they reach market weight. They are then slaughtered at the Penn State Meats Laboratory. Specialists conducting the studies determine the animals' ability to convert feed to meat, daily rate of gain, carcass quality, and meatiness.

Livestockmen who consign pens of meat animals to the Center are able to determine which bulls, boars, or rams are producing offspring that measure up to established standards for quality and edible meat.

The evaluation program, the Secretary said, is the only one of its kind in the United States and producers and scientists here and from other states feel the Pennsylvania program is "a major advancement in sire selection and carcass evaluation." He pointed out that the Commonwealth's animal industry is to be commended for its support in establishing this project.

"We're now operating at capacity levels," Secretary Bull noted, "and pens of beef cattle from Tennessee and Virginia have participated in the program. By having limited consignments from other states, we are able to make geographic comparisons and at the same time assist animal science programs in other areas."

The Center has space for five pens or 30 sheep, 20 pens or 120 swine, and 10 pens or 60 beef cattle. All animals on test receive a self-fed pelleted ration and all management phases are exactly the same for each species. All animals are weighed monthly.

During the two-year period, 483 head of livestock have been tested at the Center. Of these, 350 head were swine, 45 sheep, and 88 cattle. Fifty-five different farms were represented in the program and 72 sires have been tested.

As an outgrowth of this program, Secretary Bull said, plans are being initiated to establish a swine certification project in the Commonwealth whereby packing houses, located in the various regions, will cooperate with producers in conducting carcass evaluations.

Secretary Bull pointed out the results from all studies are available to all breeders to make comparisons when deciding which sires to purchase. Animals are selected for trials dur-

ing certain periods of the year only in order to maximize the number of tests to be run at the lowest possible cost.

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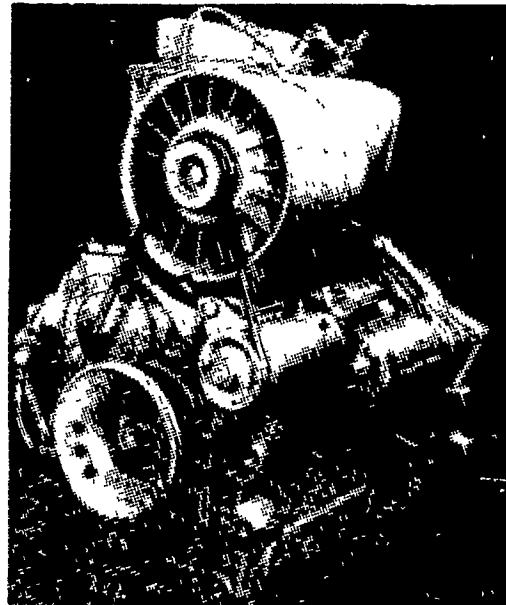
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