

Farmers Warned of Pig Cholera

With the arrival of the spring pig crop farmers should be especially watchful for signs of the possibility of transmitting illness in baby pigs because of hog cholera through the pregnant sow, the US Department of Agriculture reports.

This warning comes from officials of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. They point out that in many instances farmers may not suspect hog cholera because of the length of time between possible exposure to hog cholera and signs of the disease.

Because of this lengthy "incubation" period — and the fact that the "usual" signs of hog cholera are not always seen — this is a particularly treacherous means by which hog cholera spreads.

In 1966, ARS field and labora-

tory veterinarians found that sows exposed to hog cholera virus during pregnancy may transmit the virus to their unborn pigs without showing evidence of illness themselves. The pigs thus carry the virus when born, may become ill themselves, and may transmit the disease to other susceptible hogs.

Signs of hog cholera transmitted to baby pigs in this manner vary widely. So farmers should be alert for a number of different conditions.

In the mildest form, the only symptom of hog cholera apparent at first may be nothing more than pigs in a litter that do poorly. Or there may be litters where one or two pigs die before weaning for no apparent reason.

Other symptoms include weak or stillborn pigs, "shake" pigs, and abortions. Often these symptoms are overlooked and hog cholera is not discovered until the pigs are put under stress.

Stress may be caused by such things as weaning, castration, parasitism, disease, chilling, or movement to market. With stress, the disease emerges, either in the pigs themselves or in susceptible pigs which they contact.

ARS animal health officials point out that other diseases have some of these same signs. So a farmer should call his veterinarian at once to find out what the disease problem is and rule out the possibility of hog cholera.

Often, laboratory assistance is needed in order to distinguish hog cholera from other baby pig diseases. In other words, a farmer's motto should be, "Suspect Cholera First."

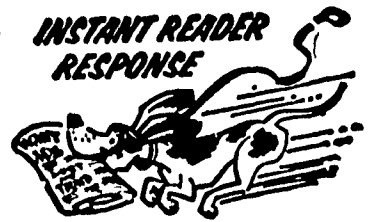
The officials note that transmission of hog cholera through the pregnant sow — the "pregnant sow syndrome" — is most apt to occur (1) in areas where outbreaks of hog cholera have occurred in the past few months and (2) in herds where pregnant sows have contacted animals vaccinated with modified live virus vaccine. In the latter instance, this is particularly true of contact with freshly vaccinated animals.

Interstate shipment of these vaccines was prohibited last July as a part of the nationwide effort to wipe out hog cholera. Cooperative State-Federal indemnities for hogs destroyed because of hog cholera are

available in all but three States — Arizona, Maine, and New York.

The animal health officials point out, however, that indemnities cannot be paid on pigs

that die before the arrival of a State or Federal veterinarian. So this is another good reason for farmers to promptly report any sickness in pigs — just in case it might be hog cholera.



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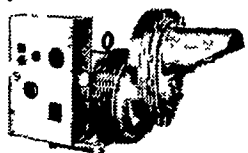
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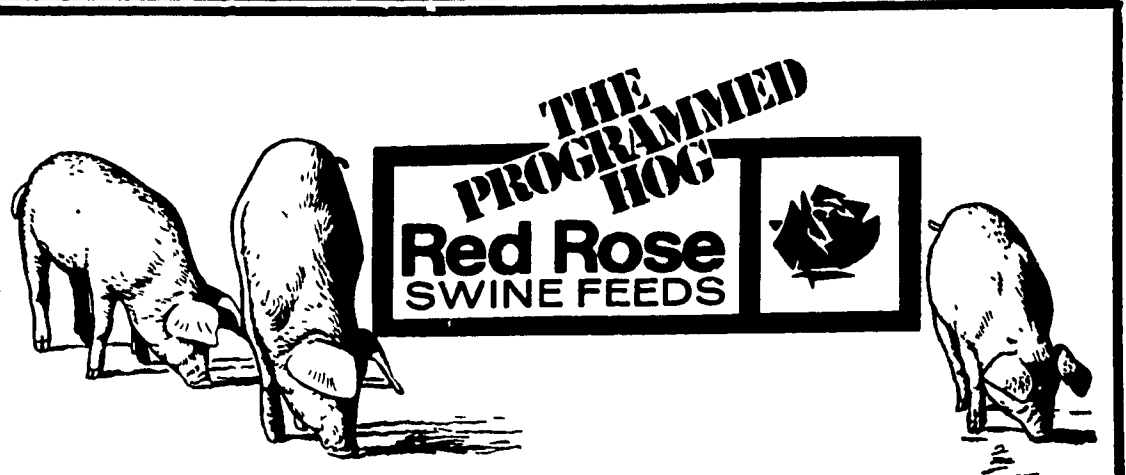
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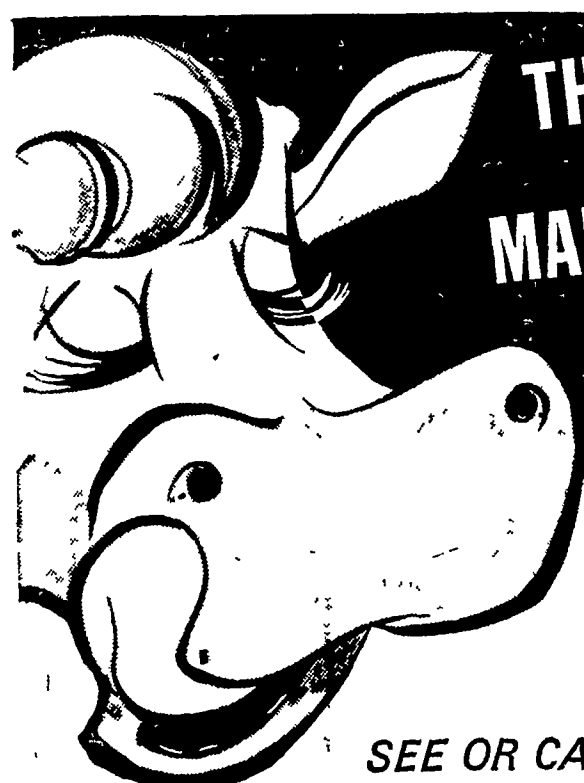
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