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Horse Vaccine Extended to Maryland, Delaware

Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin has authorized the vaccination of horses against Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis (VEE) at Government expense in two more States adjoining the lower Mississippi Valley and in the District of Columbia and six States along the Atlantic Coast.

The eight States included in the extended program are Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and New

Jersey. The 11 States already in the program, directed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service, include the southern tier of States from California to Florida, plus Georgia, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.

"We want to block the potential spread of VEE by immunizing a high percentage of horses in this country," said Dr. Ned D. Bayley, USDA's Director of Science and Education. "Vaccinating horses in the Mississippi River Valley and along the

Coastal Plains is receiving priority because of the prevalence of mosquitoes and possibly other vectors that can transmit VEE to both horses and humans."

At a meeting here yesterday with State regulatory officials, ARS and Department of Defense scientists emphasized that unless 90 per cent or more of the horses are vaccinated in a given area, the disease may continue to move — particularly where the horse population is dense.

The goal of the program is to vaccinate all horses in the 19 States and District of Columbia before November 1, when the threat from VEE infection will be reduced as mosquitoes and other vectors are killed by cold weather. These 19 States have about half of the horses in the United States.

Representatives of all designated States agreed to cooperate in the effort. They will submit plans for the program and establish necessary vaccine distribution points.

As soon as the States are prepared to use it, USDA will supply the vaccine made available from the Department of Defense. Commercial supplies of vaccine will be available September 1 for use on a voluntary basis in States outside those in the program. Tests on horses by ARS animal health scientists in Texas and Mexico have shown the vaccine to be safe, thus permitting removal of the "experimental" classification and discontinuance of the use of waivers required initially in the program.

A control center, specially equipped at ARS's Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Md., for coordinating emergency programs, is in operation now; and the VEE emergency headquarters at Houston, Tex., is being phased out.

At the peak of the VEE program, more than 4,000 workers were engaged in fighting the disease — including practicing veterinarians, State employees, and Federal personnel drawn from across the Nation. More than 1.7 million horses have been vaccinated; and more than 8 million acres of the Texas Rio Grande Valley and Gulf Coast areas of Texas and Louisiana were treated to control mosquitoes, carriers of the disease. The U.S. Air Force treated about 25 per cent of the acres and private contractors about 75 per cent. Spraying was completed August 13.

VEE was first confirmed by laboratory tests in Cameron County, Tex., July 9, and later in 15 other South Texas counties. VEE has not been found outside Texas.

Calf Study Is Reported

Short-scrotum calves yielded more and leaner meat than steers in a recent study reported at the annual meeting of the American Society of Animal Science at Davis, Calif.

Dr. Earl Ray, associate professor of animal science at New Mexico State University, said the testicles of the calves had been pushed up against the body and held there by an elastator band, thus increasing the temperature of the testicle and causing sterility without loss of the male hormone testosterone. As a result, the calves grew faster and yielded five per cent more salable meat than bulls, although they didn't grade as high as steers.

Consumers rated retail cuts from short-scrotum carcasses higher than those from steers for over-all acceptability.

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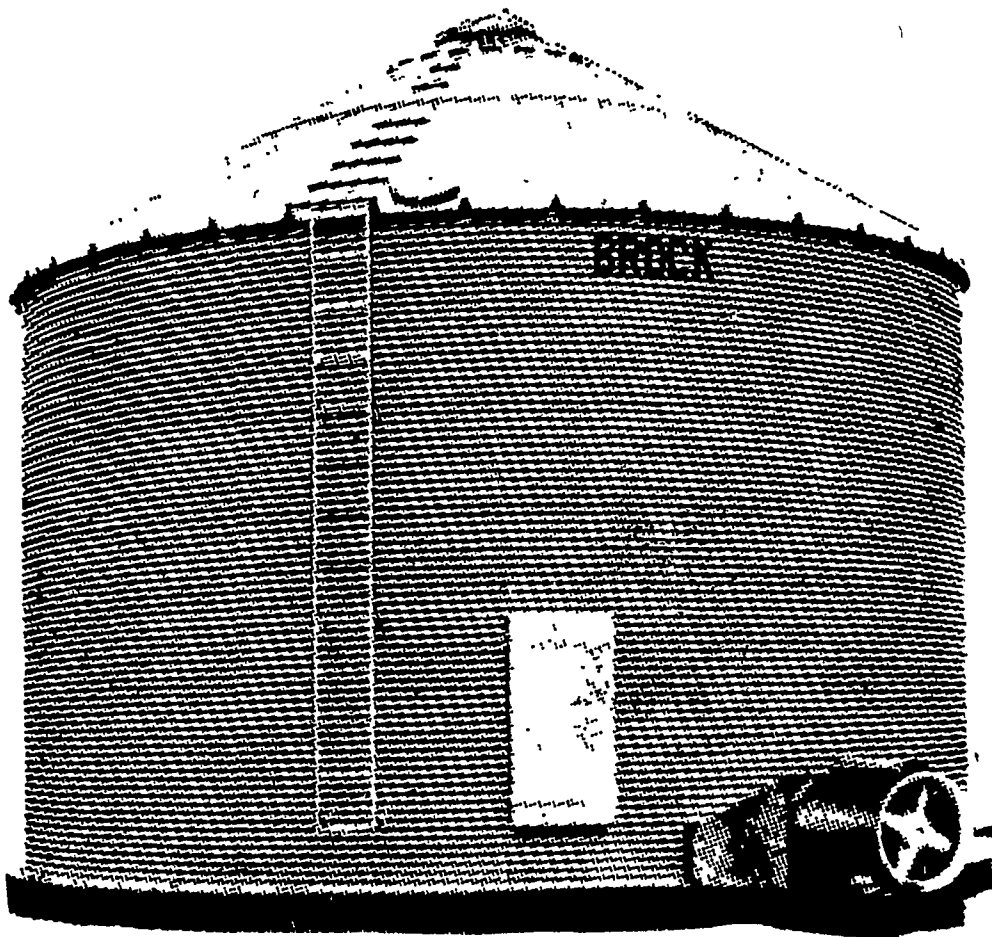
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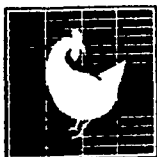


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