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Brucellosis Free Date Moved Up to 1975

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Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz has committed the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to a stepped-up drive to achieve the eradication of brucellosis from livestock by the end of 1975—a goal called for the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and endorsed by the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA).

"It will take even greater efforts by the livestock industry to eradicate this disease that causes millions of dollars in production losses in addition to the \$40 million a year spent for the eradication program. With eradication in livestock, the source of human brucellosis—sometimes called undulant fever—is also eliminated," the Secretary told agricultural communicators at a special luncheon recently.

Secretary Butz commended the agricultural communicators, the livestock industry, State animal health officials and their associations, for the support of the program that has already resulted in the eradication of brucellosis from cattle in 24 States and the Virgin Islands. He emphasized the need to eradicate all livestock diseases that reduce the production of meat and other animal products essential to human health and nutrition.

Sharing the occasion with Secretary Butz and confirming the December 1975 eradication

goal were Mississippi's Commissioner of Agriculture Jim "Buck" Ross, Chairman of the Brucellosis Subcommittee of NASDA, and Dr. John C. Shook, President of USAHA.

Progress already made in eradicating brucellosis was related by Dr. Ernest Saulmon, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Service (APHS). "Over 54 per cent of the counties in the United States, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands, have obtained Certified Brucellosis-Free status for their cattle", Dr. Saulmon said.

"Puerto Rico and seven additional States—Indiana, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Arkansas, and Illinois—could achieve Certified Brucellosis-Free status by the end of 1972", he added.

Dr. Saulmon pointed out that at the present rate, the brucellosis eradication program will not be completed earlier than 1980. He predicted that with a stepped up program the goal can be reached by December 1975 and save about \$185 million in program costs alone.

The completion of the brucellosis eradication program will not only bring about greater savings of tax dollars, but will eliminate the millions of dollars in losses suffered by the livestock industry because of reduced production due to abortions, poor gains and longer feeding periods,

and will assure the Nation of adequate supplies of milk, meat, and other animal products.

"A few decades ago, the goal we aim to reach would have been considered entirely unrealistic", Dr. Saulmon said.

In 1951, 3,139 cases of human brucellosis were reported, and over 65 per cent of these were traced to infected cattle. In 1971, only 171 human cases were reported and about 65 per cent of these cases involved infected swine.

Five States—Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, and Vermont—and the Virgin Islands have completed swine brucellosis eradication programs and are Validated Brucellosis-Free. Other States with counties free of swine brucellosis are Connecticut two, Hawaii one, Maryland one, Massachusetts four, and Michigan ten, plus Puerto Rico with 43 municipalities as Validated Brucellosis-Free Areas.

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