

We Need The Labs

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how important these labs are to Pennsylvania livestock and, especially, poultry farmers.

The rumors said that the Evans City and Tunkhannock labs were being closed on the recommendation of a committee called the Governor's Review of Government Management. Some of the rumors even said that ALL the labs were to be closed. As far as we can find out, these rumors are definitely false.

And it's just as well. According to one authority, Pennsylvania's present set-up is comparable to other states with extensive poultry industries. Presently in this state there are about 16 million layers, 60 million broilers and 2.25 million turkeys. A disease epidemic could seriously cripple our poultry industry.

Right now in California, for example, federal and state authorities are working together to control an outbreak of Newcastle disease. They have slaughtered 3 million birds, inoculated 20 million more and have spent nearly \$5 million in the process.

California is on the way to winning this battle, and they're depending heavily on labs like the ones here. Without the labs, the chances of winning would probably be much smaller.

No matter what happens, Lancaster County farmers would probably not be greatly affected. They use the Harrisburg laboratory, which has never been recommended for closing.

The danger would come if a disease like Newcastle were to gain a foothold in the areas surrounding Butler or Wyoming counties. Because these areas are a good three hour drive from State College, farmers aren't as liable to get their birds tested as quickly as they would be if a lab were more convenient.

The committee felt that a savings of \$73,000 per year could be realized by closing these labs. One reliable source, however, said it would actually cost more to close the labs because the work they now do would have to be contracted from other less convenient labs.

At any rate, we feel keeping open is cheap insurance especially in light of the California, (the labs) experience. We applaud the work of the laboratory staffs, and the efforts by Secretary McHale and Raymond Kersteder to keep all the labs open.

Help Us Serve You

If your organization didn't make our farm calendar this week, it's not because we don't like you or your organization.

We may have missed it in the rush. Or maybe you forgot to tell us.

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