

Animal Scientist Says Feed Additives Vital To Production of Food

"It is a real paradox that at a time when food costs are in the headlines almost daily, additives used in food and the production of food have become the target of environmental 'purists.' Doing away with various additives in livestock production would mean increased death loss or morbidity in livestock, reduced total production, and increased cost of food derived from livestock."

This was one of the major thrusts of a presentation here at Penn State last week by Dr. R. L. Preston, research animal scientist from the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, Wooster. Preston summed up the current feed additive situation at the 26th annual reciprocal meat conference of the American Meat Science Association, held this week on the campus of Pennsylvania State University. He

documented his remarks with research data from a number of U.S. research institutions.

Preston urged that livestock production technology, including the use of certain additives, be based on sound scientific and economic considerations rather than regulated by "legislative impossibilities or by persons who continually raise questions but seldom have any answers."

The Ohio scientist then reviewed the 1973 feed additive situation. He said additives used in production of meat animals can be classified into three categories—nutrients needed to assure animal health and survival, products which reduce disease and parasite infestations in livestock, and physiological supplements.

Preston chose not to dwell on nutrients added to animals' diets other than to stress that these are

necessary for deficient rations. Even these are sometimes questioned. "Difficulties related to the approval of selenium additions to livestock rations are an example of the process through which a 'modern nutrient' must pass while well-documented livestock losses occur because of deficiency of this nutrient."

Preston defended the use of antibiotics to assure livestock health and survival and make efficient production possible. These have made a real and sustained contribution to production of pork and beef, according to Preston.

He said that sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics continues to increase livestock gains and improve feed efficiency and health. Presently seven antibiotics are used in the swine industry. Tissue residue data have "established that meat from swine fed antibiotics at prophylactic or low levels does not contain hazardous antibiotic residues."

Preston said antibiotics in cattle can be divided into two categories—those used on young calves and those used on feedlot cattle. Five antibiotics are presently cleared for use in beef cattle feeds. None has been found to result in residues above

established tolerances when used at subtherapeutic or nutritional levels.

The use of antibiotics has been questioned in recent years because of concern over development of resistant strains of microorganisms which might transfer resistance to organisms which cause human disease.

Since livestock still respond to antibiotic additives, Preston feels this indicates that no real problem of antibiotic resistance exists. Further, he says studies in humans have failed to show that transfer of resistance factors has played any significant role in bacterial infections.

(Continued On Page 13)

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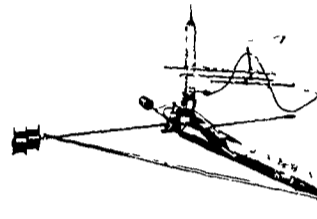
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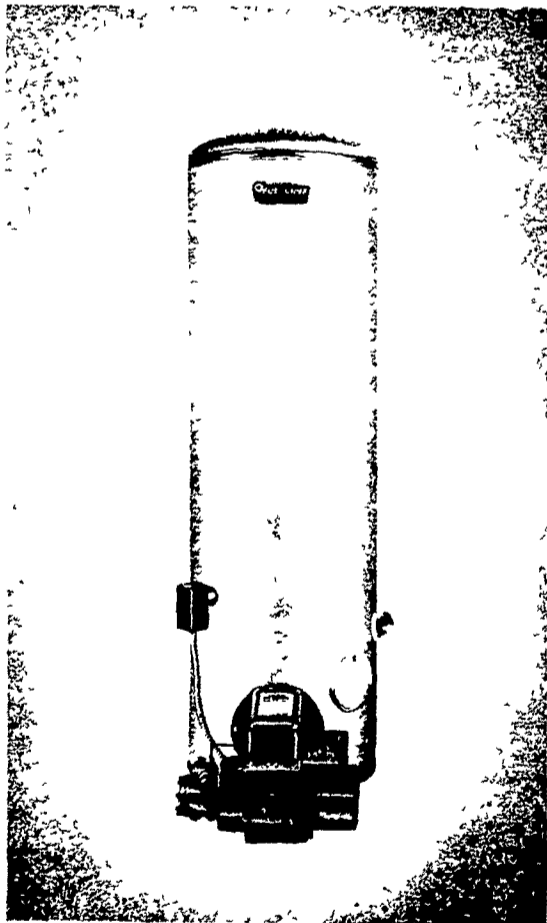
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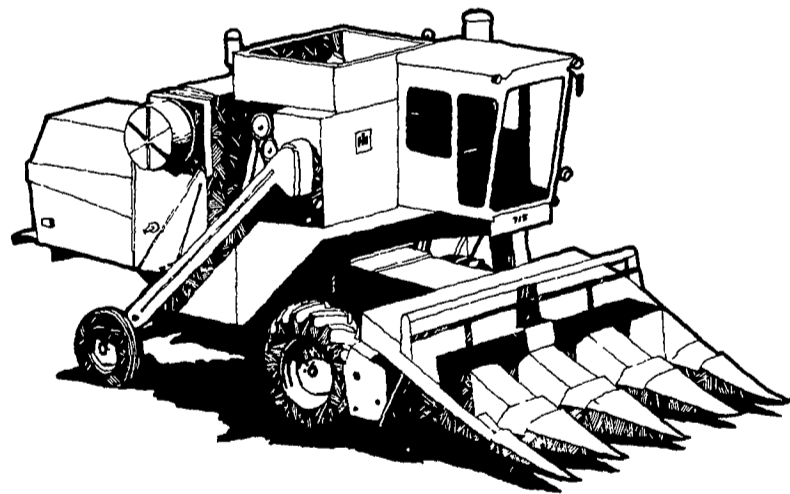
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