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## Kuhfuss Urges Open Hearings on DES

Hearings should be held to establish the safety and value of diethylstilbestrol (DES) in feeding slaughter cattle, according to William J. Kuhfuss, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. In a letter to the U. S. Food and Drug Administration, Kuhfuss protested proposed changes in regulations for the use of DES in cattle feeding saying that changes should be made only after careful determination of the facts through open hearings.

Kuhfuss asked that hearings be held to determine the value and safety of DES and the scientific facts on whether it is really necessary to increase the withdrawal period for the drug from 7 to 14 days.

He said, in a letter to the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), that there is no documentation of conclusive, scientific evidence that the substance is in fact harmful to consumers when it is used under FDA established livestock feeding levels and when withdrawn as presently required.

Kuhfuss also said that the American Farm Bureau vigorously opposes

revocation of established testing methods until better methods can be developed. "It is recognized that 'no effect' levels for the use of DES in feeds need to be established and enforced to protect human health," he added.

Diethylstilbestrol in minute quantities has been used by many feeders in fattening cattle. The drug stimulates growth and produces more efficient gains. Generally credited with gains of around 10 percent in feed efficiency, the drug was used as an implanted pellet and in feed mixes.

The use of DES in feed was banned January 1, 1973 and ear implants were banned April 27, 1974 after newly developed and highly sensitive tests showed minute traces of DES in the livers of an occasional animal. Manufacturers of the chemical sued for a public hearing to present research data and other evidence to support safety claims for its use. The FDA had banned the use of the drug without the usual hearing procedure.

The federal Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. ruled on January 24, 1974

that the FDA must hold hearings before banning use of the drug. At least two companies have since returned to the manufacture of feed mixes containing the drug and also are selling ear implants.

Hearing dates for examination of the use of the drug have not been announced but procedural changes have been announced. It is anticipated that several months will be required for preparations and hearings on the use of

the drug.

In commenting on the need for improved cattle feeding efficiency Kuhfuss said, "Feeders have been sustaining losses of \$100-200 per head the past several months. No industry can survive long on this basis. The continuing cost-price squeeze faced by cattle feeders can be eased to some degree through more efficient production with the continued use of DES as a growth stimulant."

## 'Restraining Farm Fences' Program Reinstated

The U. S. Department of Agriculture today announced that it is reinstating the practice "restoring farm fences" under the Emergency Conservation Measures Program administered by the department's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS).

The measure was eliminated as a program practice March 12. It is being reinstated retroactively, ASCS officials said, to apply to the recently designated disaster areas in parts of the South and Midwest where tornadoes caused severe damage to farmland.

Under Public Law 85-58, payments may be made to farmers who carry out emergency measures to rehabilitate farmlands damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes or other natural disasters when, as a result of the disaster, new conservation problems have been created. Cost sharing for fencing is limited to restoring or replacing those essential to the rehabilitation of conservation structures or facilities, or essential to the establishment of permanent vegetative cover on areas seriously eroded or subject to serious erosion as a result of the natural disaster.

The percent of cost-sharing allowed for new materials used in restoring or replacing a fence is based on the general condition and

length of use of that fence prior to the disaster.

In addition to cost sharing, loans under the Farmers Home Administration Disaster Loan Program are also available to farmers in designated disaster areas for the replacement of fencing destroyed by the disaster.

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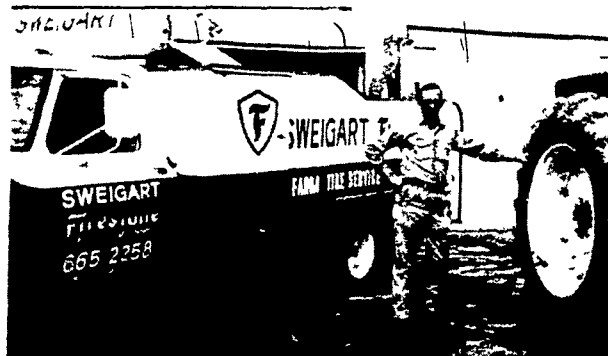
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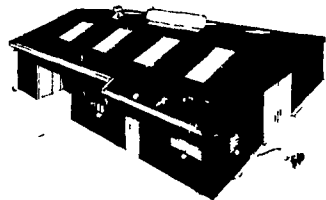
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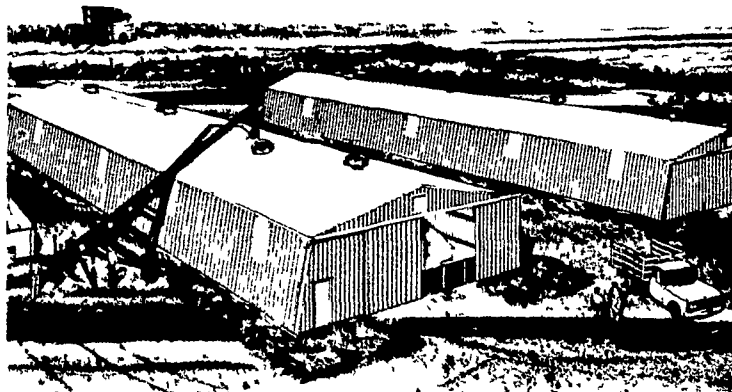
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