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Brucellosis - Few Farmers Are Affected, But It Can Bring Great Personal Tragedy

Lancaster County is rumored to be a hotbed of brucellosis, the scourge of the dairyman, a threat to both his bank account and his family's health.

There is brucellosis in Lancaster County. But according to Dr. John W. Dick, with the Bureau of Animals Industries in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the problem in Lancaster and other Southeastern Counties is no better or worse than can reasonably be expected. "There are a lot of cows in Lancaster County and we are having trouble with four herds. But there are 19 quarantined herds in the state," Dick said on Thursday.

"Even that is no great degree of incidence. I don't think we need any more news stories about brucellosis. People get ex-

cited about a problem that doesn't really amount to anything."

Lancaster County has about 70,000 dairy cows, or some 10 percent of the state's total dairy herd. With four quarantined herds, the county has about 20 percent of the brucellosis herds in the state. The number of infected herds both in the state and the county is small compared to the total number of cows.

In Lancaster County, milk ring tests uncovered only one reactor cow in each in two of the infected herds. Another herd, reportedly in the northern part of the county, had no reactor herds in its most recent test.

But numbers don't tell the whole story. One herd in Southern Lancaster County is slowly being wiped out by brucellosis, and the herd owner, has spent the past

several weeks in Lancaster General Hospital being treated for undulant fever.

We talked to his wife by phone on Wednesday. "We lost nine cows two weeks ago," she said. "We've lost 90 cows so far, and we had 197 when this whole thing started."

The nightmare for this farm family began on the first of November when a milk ring test disclosed brucellosis in the herd. In April, 1974, that same herd had been tested and certified free of brucellosis. Where did the disease come from? "We have no idea," the farmer's wife said.

Except for the condemned animals, no cows have been moved into or out of the herd since the quarantine began. And the last time cows were added to the herd was in April, 1974. That's when 18 cows were bought from a

herd in Florida. Florida is one of 13 Gulf Coast states which are acknowledged to have serious dairy health problems.

We asked Dr. Dick if those cows could have brought brucellosis along with them from the South. "Every one of those cows had good health charts," Dick said. "We checked back with the Florida agriculture officials, and they told us every cow had a negative milk ring test. And there's no question about the legitimacy of the tests. They were all completely honest."

Where, then, did the disease come from? "We don't know. It's impossible to trace every cow," Dick said. "The cows lose eartags. People forget. We don't have enough time, money or people to check every cow. And the incubation period can be very long. A cow may

be exposed to brucellosis and not show any symptoms - even a milk ring reaction - until nine months later. We do know that all the problem herds had added cows sometime before they developed the disease. And as far as we can tell, all the cows that were added came with legal health charts."

Dick said indemnities are paid to farmers who must destroy diseased cows. The state indemnity amounts to 67-percent of the cows appraised value. There's also an additional \$50 indemnity from the federal treasury, and the farmer gets whatever salvage value the animal is worth. The average indemnity from the state is about \$300 per cow, but the total indemnity cannot exceed \$100,000 for any one herd.

Dick said the disease is transmitted from cow to cow

through uterine secretions. The human form of the disease - undulant fever - can be contracted from raw milk or by contact with infectious secretions from the cow. Pasteurization kills the disease organism, so there is no danger of people contracting undulant fever from pasteurized milk.

Farms which are downstream from infected herds may have a legitimate concern about the disease being transmitted from herd to herd by water-borne disease organisms, especially if an infected cow were to abort in the stream. "I've been doing this kind of work for 30 years, though, and I never heard of brucellosis being spread by a stream," Dick said.

"I'm sure that dairymen downstream, particularly from that bad herd in

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Francois Phillippe

FFA Exchange Student Enjoys Farm Work

Over the years, Lancaster County has become a "home away from home" for many visiting exchange students.

This spring a young man from France found his way to Lancaster County as a work exchange student under the FFA program.

Francois Phillippe arrived in Lancaster County in April and will be residing with the Robert Ginder family near Manheim until September.

Francois or Phillip (as he has been nicknamed by the Ginders) comes from the farming country of France on the Route de Paris - CAGNY. He attended grammar school and then chose agriculture school for his higher education.

Francois explained that the agricultural school in his province of France teaches much theory but not much practical work.

"Learning comes from books but no field work is taught," the young man commented.

"We did learn many things of agriculture but without the practical work."

As an agricultural trainee, Francois worked on two dairy and crop farms in France for some additional practical work.

Since arriving at the Ginders, who have a dairy farm on the Elizabethtown Road, Francois has spent

much of his working time helping out with the dairy operations and also working in the field.

Tractor driving has been one of his favorite occupations along with working in the fields.

"In France we only work 40 hours in the fields but here you put so much effort into your work," the student explained.

Mrs. Ginder explained that Francois has been fascinated by the filling of the silos. When Lancaster Farming inquired why, Francois answered, "here you have tall silos that reach to the sky but in France we have only silos under the ground, they are not filled with machinery such as you have."

The young man commented on the livestock in this country saying that it was similar to those breeds in France although the beef looked somewhat different.

Francois went on to explain some of the foods that he had found to be different in this country.

"We do not eat corn in France and I do not care for it here, but I do like corn flakes as they are different."

"You eat so much here at one meal, but in France we eat just a little at a time."

One thing which has been of interest to the student is gathering and eating eggs.



Francois Phillippe, an FFA Work Exchange Student from France is living with the Robert Ginder family near Manheim.

Mrs. Ginder explained that Francois liked to gather the eggs and also eat them.

"He (Francois) told our family that he hadn't eaten many eggs in France - so everytime I serve them, I know he'll enjoy it."

The Ginder family had not originally planned to board the exchange student but when a home could not be found for the young man, the Ginders offered their farm.

"Since we have three daughters, we felt we could use some more help on the farm during the summer," Mrs. Ginder stated.

"It has worked out quite well as Francois is a help in

the field."

One of the Ginder's daughters, Ruby, who is well known for her FFA activities summed up her approval by stating, "he's okay - he can drive a tractor real well!"

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County Agent Contest Is Held in Lancaster

County agents from Southeastern Pennsylvania captured nearly a fourth of the prizes in this year's Northeast Public Information Awards Program sponsored annually by the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. Another Pennsylvanian, from McKean County in the northwestern part of the state, also took a prize.

Entries in seven categories from the 11-state Northeast region were judged on Thursday afternoon at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center. Winning entries, the top three in each category, will be sent onto the national judges, whose decisions will be announced during the NACAA annual meeting scheduled for October in Milwaukee.

Area winners included Paul Reber, Norristown, with a second place in the slide feature story and a third place in the news photo story; Max Smith, Lancaster, third place feature

story; Jay W. Irwin, Lancaster, third place direct mail piece; Jered K. Tyson, third place newsletter. C.E. Craver, Smethport, in McKean County, had the first place radio entry.

The winners in the seven categories were:

Radio: 1 - C.E. Craver, Smethport, Pa.; 2 - Fred Giebel, Worcester, Mass.; 3 - Bruce Mariott, Laconia, N.H.

Colored Slide Feature: 1 - Reginald Treband, Belair, Md.; 2 - Paul Reber, Norristown, Pa.; 3 - Arthur Poole, Moundsville, W. Va.

News Photo Story: 1 - David Sorensen, Conway, N.H.; 2 - Arthur Poole, Moundsville, W. Va.; 3 - Paul Reber, Norristown, Pa.

Direct Mail Piece: 1 - William Quinn, Syracuse, N.Y.; 2 - Herbert Zeichick, Bangor, Me.; 3 - Jay W. Irwin, Lancaster, Pa.

Personal News Column: 1 - Ancil B. Cutlip, St. Marys, W. Va.; 2 - Reginald Treband, Belair, Md.; 3 -

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Dairy Issue June 7

On June 7, Lancaster Farming will recognize this dynamic dairy industry with our Annual Dairy Issue. We extend a special invitation to dairy groups and organizations, as well as individuals, to submit articles and news on dairying for the Dairy Issue.

To be sure you make the Dairy Issue, please submit all advertising and editorial material by Tuesday, June 3. Call us at 717-394-3047 or 717-626-2191. Or write to Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 266, Lititz, PA 17543.