

# No short cuts in cattle imports



Three John Deere dealers from South Africa were visiting the area this week in an effort to promote dealer to dealer relations on an international level. Pictured, while visiting Landis Brothers in Lancaster, were (from left) Malcom Krull, Cape Providence; Louis Serfantein, Cape Providence and Georgg Young also of

Cape Providence. The group has plans to visit the Evergreen Tractor Co. in Lebanon and also George Seiple and Sons at Easton. The men were accompanied by Henry Dohner, John Deere territory manager, and A. B. Hoying from the Syracuse John Deere Office.

Cattle born in France, Germany, Switzerland and other countries can make it to the United States; but it's not as quick and easy as some people are saying, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials.

USDA's words of caution are being spoken in the wake of several news stories suggesting that a new, fast, direct import procedure is already available for cattle originating from countries considered by USDA to be infected with foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) — even though the Department's Fleming Key livestock import station is not due to open until mid 1978. The big shortcut is supposed to be

through quarantine facilities on the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

No such thing! Dr. John Hejl, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) cautioned livestock breeders and importers not to get their hopes up for "quickie" cattle importations into the United States by this means.

Interest among breeders and importers was sparked recently when USDA recognized the French islands, off the coast of Newfoundland, as being free of FMD. A limited number of permits for the two Canadian operated quarantine stations there are held in reserve and distributed by the governor of St. Pierre et Miquelon. These may be made available to U.S. importers, who would then be able to bring cattle to the United States after establishing their FMD-free status on St. Pierre and Miquelon.

According to Hejl, European-born cattle imported from these tiny islands would have to spend a minimum of eight and one-half months there before being allowed to move to USDA's own animal import center at Clifton, NJ. Once at Clifton — assuming space was available at this limited facility the cattle would have to pass an additional 30-day isolation period.

"FMD is a potentially disastrous disease of livestock, and for that reason

there never will be an 'easy' way to import cattle into the United States from countries where the disease is known to exist," Hejl said.

The best hope for increased imports, according to Hejl, lies in the construction of the new USDA-operated livestock import center on Fleming Key, near Key West, Fl. This facility at the tip of the Florida Keys — 100 miles from the mainland — will permit cattle to be imported directly from FMD-infected nations for the first time since 1930. Even then, however, it will take a five-month isolation under strictly controlled conditions with intensive testing — including long pre-export screening in the nation of origin.

Until Fleming Key Animal Import Center becomes a reality — in 1978 — cattle born in FMD-infected nations will be able to be imported only by a long and expensive 'third nation' route. The procedures may seem overly cautious to those who have never fought an FMD outbreak, but it is just such procedures that have kept the United States free of this devastating livestock disease since 1929.

The demand for new breeding stock is such that importers and breeders will no doubt wish to use the facilities at St. Pierre and Miquelon, but Hejl emphasized that this 'third country' route is still no short cut.

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