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# Swine restrictions considered

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NEW YORK — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Advisory Committee on Hog Cholera Eradication has urged that the "strongest possible actions" be taken to prevent any new outbreaks of the deadly swine disease. The committee's June 17 meeting in Washington was held with representatives from the hog cholera committees of two national

organizations concerned with keeping livestock healthy — the U.S. Animal Health Association and the Livestock Conservation Institute.

Specific recommendations made at the advisory committee meeting included:

- Reinstatement of hog cholera quarantines in three New England states, if necessary, to prevent spread;

- A call for all states to pass laws banning the use or possession of hog cholera vaccines; and

- The carrying out of an overall review of the practice of feeding garbage to swine.

The committee also urged USDA to take strong steps in assuring availability of adequate resources and personnel to complete the cooperation state-federal eradication task begun in late 1962. Today, most states

have had no hog cholera for five years or longer.

The committee expressed grave concern over the current situation in the recent outbreak areas of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Officials of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) said use of illegal hog cholera vaccine could cause further outbreaks.

Such outbreaks, said the committee, would further delay eradication, threaten the nation's pork supply, and cut off potential export markets.

Certain export markets were first opened to U.S. pork producers in early 1975, after the country had gone 12 months with no hog cholera in any of the 50 states. For instance, millions of dollars in export sales to Great Britain of such items as pork kidneys were realized before the market was closed by a

flareup of hog cholera in Texas last July.

Countries free of hog cholera ban the import of fresh pork products from countries where the disease still exists. Experts told the committee that the disease may still exist in New England.

The committee recommended that federal hog cholera quarantines again be imposed in New England if herds now under surveillance are deemed to be infected or exposed. Such quarantine would be needed to protect the rest of the country.

The committee was told that all of the recent hog cholera cases in New England involved garbage-fed swine. States that permit the feeding of food waste to swine require cooking to kill any hog cholera virus that may be present in scraps of raw meat, offal or bones from infected pigs. However, policing this cooking requirement is difficult at best — a fact which has led several states to ban garbage feeding altogether.

Hog cholera is a disease of swine only; but it is very contagious, and its acute form is highly fatal to pigs. Although the disease poses very serious economic losses to the swine industry, there is no health hazard to humans who eat pork products.

The 12-member advisory committee is chaired by Richard Feltner, assistant secretary for Marketing and Consumer Services. It consists of swine producers, market operators, veterinarians, and representatives of agricultural and commodity organizations.

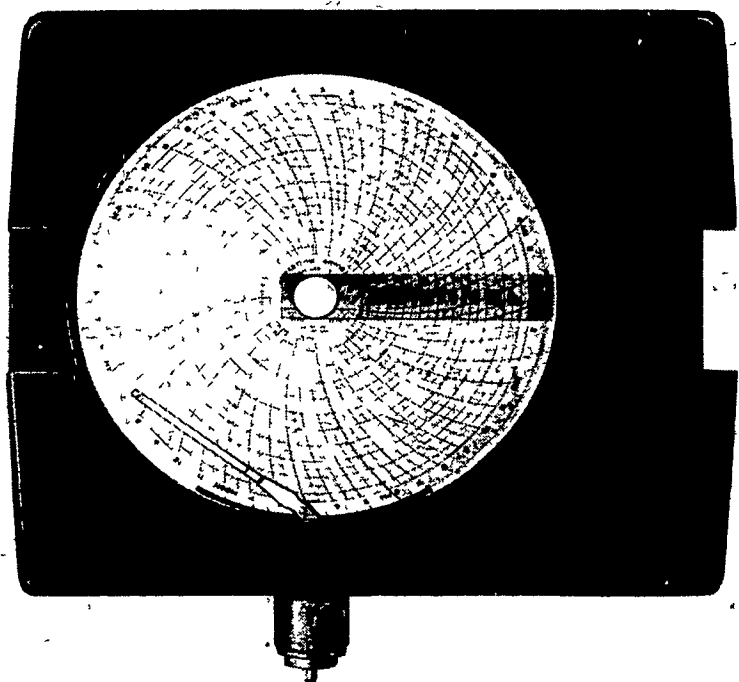
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