

Poultry disease discovered

WASHINGTON, D.C. Two separate, but possibly connected, outbreaks of exotic Newcastle disease some 4,000 miles apart have both the poultry industry and USDA quite concerned. Neither outbreak, however, is in commercial poultry and the nearest poultry operation to either quarantined facility is four to five miles away.

The first suspected outbreak, on Feb. 18, was detected at Charlotte Courthouse, Va., in an aviary wholesale outlet.

The second case was reported Feb. 23, from San Diego, Calif., first in a wholesale outlet and then in a flock of pheasants.

According to USDA, there were 18 shipments of birds from San Diego into other parts of California, and four shipments into Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico and Arizona. From the Virginia wholesaler, birds were shipped into the following 19 states: Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Maryland, Ohio, Virginia,

Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Colorado, Missouri, Iowa and California.

Poultrymen are advised to observe strict sanitary production rules and to check any suspected mortality. According to USDA officials, who apparently have the situation well in hand, there is no evidence of exposure to commercial poultry in any of the areas currently suspected.

Bank's land plan braked

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Congressman Tom Harkin (D-5th Ia.) says he thinks opponents of the Continental Bank and Trust Company of Chicago's plan to set up a \$50 million corporate investment fund to buy farm land have succeeded in blocking it.

Harkin called for congressional hearings to investigate the plan and served on the U.S. House subcommittee which held hearings on the matter for three days.

"While the bank has yet to make its official decision, I think it's been effectively stopped," Harkin said after the hearings. Harkin noted the bank pledged to give "great weight" to congressional attitudes toward the plan. "All the Democrats and all the Republicans on the subcommittee were unanimously opposed to it," Harkin said. "In light of

their previous pledge, I don't see how they can do anything but drop this idea."

Harkin also said he thought it "unlikely" the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) would grant the tax-exempt status the bank had sought for the trust fund. Testimony at the hearings raised "serious questions" about the plan's eligibility for such status, he said.

"Even if IRS did grant them tax exempt status, I still don't think they'll

proceed with the plan," Harkin added. "They realize the minute they might try to go ahead with this, Congress is going to move to put an immediate stop to it."

Harkin warned, "While the plan has probably been defeated, we must remain on guard to see that it's not resurrected at a later date." He urged adoption of the Family Farm Anti-Trust Act, which he has co-sponsored, to permanently block any future similar proposals.

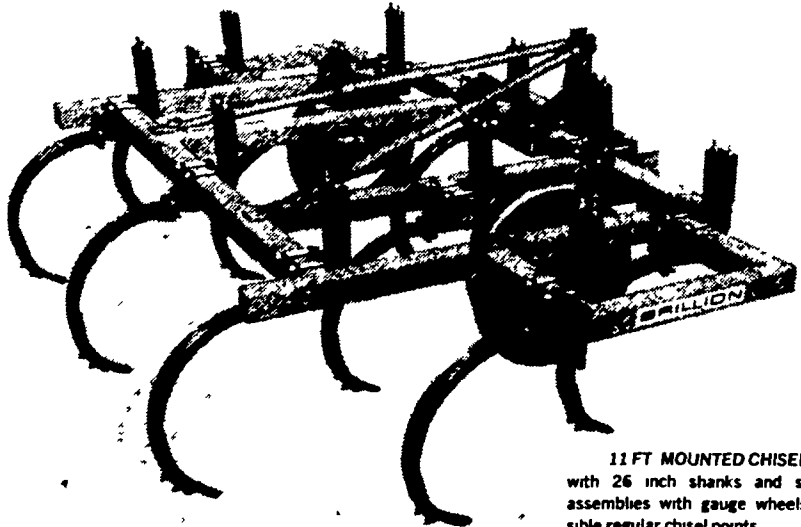
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