

# USDA to develop pseudorabies plan

WASHINGTON, D. C. - Within a month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will identify control measures needed in a program on pseudorabies, based on information presented at a two-day fact-finding session held in Ames, Iowa on this serious disease of swine.

different groups within the swine industry during this period to get additional input," said Dr. Frank Mulhern, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Concern about pseudorabies - a growing threat to the swine industry - was voiced again and again

by more than 600 hog producers, veterinarians, state and federal animal health officials and representatives of other segments of the swine industry attending the April 4-5 conference.

Although the feeling of concern was almost unanimous, there was not agreement on exactly how to deal with the disease.

"The consensus was that the ultimate goal is to get rid of the disease," said Mulhern, "but we can't get there immediately. What we need right now are ways to stop the spread of the disease and to protect clean herds."

Pseudorabies, also known as Aujeszki's disease or "mad itch" in cattle, may cause death losses of up to 100 per cent in pigs less than two weeks old. Swine can transmit pseudorabies to cattle and sheep, where it is almost always fatal. In these species, it produces an encephalomyelitis with signs of severe itching and self mutilation - hence the name "mad itch." As pigs grow older, they develop more resistance to pseudorabies. Adult animals may not show signs at all, although some strains of the virus cause severe death losses in grown pigs. Pseudorabies does not affect humans.

The incidence of pseudorabies in swine has

increased dramatically in recent years. Laboratory - confirmed cases - an indication of actual incident - rose from 125 in 1974 to 225 in 1975 and to 714 last year.

Reports at the conference indicate we may already have equalled last year's total during the first three months of 1977," Mulhern said.

Purebred and commercial swine producers from the "hog belt" states of the Midwest detailed how pseudorabies had dramatically affected them. One producer from Illinois related how he had lost about 140 litters per month for four months in his hog-raising operation.

Following are additional points brought out at the conference:

- A safe and effective vaccine is needed to reduce losses and control outbreaks in areas where the disease is a serious problem. Although

there is presently no USDA-licensed vaccine, one is under development. It was recommended that any vaccine should be used under strict controls, with its use restricted so that it would not interfere with a long-term goal or eradicating the disease.

- Additional research is needed, but actions to control the disease cannot wait.

- The test for pseudorabies needs to be standardized, and additional simpler, quicker and more economical tests should be developed.

- A top priority is determining the actual extent of pseudorabies infection nationwide.

- Movement of swine from diseased herds should be controlled now to protect free herds and areas.

- A proposal was made to have a three-stage program to combat the disease.

Approximately 30 speakers, including scientists from Hungary, Denmark, Canada and Mexico - plus work producers from a number of states - presented short talks on many aspects of pseudorabies. Extensive questions and answers sessions were interspersed among the talks.

## Use of soybean meal declining

HUDSON, Ia. - Two different surveys indicate that the use of soybean meal is declining and that farmers also intend to plant over 10 per cent more soybeans this Spring than last year, according to the American Soybean Association (ASA).

"Price rationing is already taking effect even though it will not show up in official statistics for at least two months," said Dr. Kenneth L. Bader, chief executive officer of the association.

Soybean processors are operating at six to eight percent less than normal and animal feeders are switching to alternate sources of protein or reducing the amount of soybean meal in rations, according to industry sources.

"Most of the soybean meal went out of the ruminant feed market about two months ago, and hog farmers who mix their own feed are simply using more grains and less soybean meal. When they cut protein from 16 to 14 per cent of the ration - that's a 12.5 per cent decrease in demand," said Bader. Since soybean meal is 44 per cent protein, that means a reduction of soybean meal demand in excess of 20 per cent.

He said that the futures price of soybean meal has continued its upward trend because of the false demand generated by speculators. The cash meal price and the futures price for soybean meal is drifting further apart

because of the difference in real demand and speculated demand.

He also complimented Secretary Bob Bergland on his statements concerning the possibility of an embargo on soybean exports. "The situation is entirely different this year because there is a good supply of fish meal and other sources of protein. More wheat and corn are available, and I don't believe we'll see anyone drowning baby chicks on television this year, said Bader.

"We've got one embargo experience under our belts, and I think everyone will look at the situation in a rational manner.

"Our soybean farmers have always produced enough to fill the demand if the market was right. Their plans to plant 55.6 million acres this year, or a 10.6 per cent increase over last year indicates their willingness to continue supplying the market with all the soybeans it can take.

"If we average 28 bushels per acre, we will produce 1,558,872,000 bushels of soybeans, thus make up for the small carryover expected at the end of this marketing year."

The ASA survey showed that farmers in the corn belt plan to increase soybean acreage by 9.5 per cent in the south by 12.4 per cent, Southeast by 13.3 per cent and the East Coast by 7.6 per cent.

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