

Research develops methods to control horse breeding

NEWARK, Del. — It's possible for horse breeders to control estrus—or heat—and ovulation in mares so that breeding is done at the owner's convenience.

According to Mel Reitnour, extension equine specialist at the University of Delaware, researchers in Colorado have found that artificial light and nutrition can affect the onset of the breeding season. He cites research using the hormone prostaglandin to induce heat.

Reitnour says that the Animal Reproduction Laboratory at Colorado State University (CSU) has been researching an estrus-inducing technique in which mares are given injections of prostaglandin two weeks apart. When the injections were given to a group of mares at CSU, he said, about 80 per cent came into heat within six days after the second injection. A majority was in estrus two or three days after the second injection.

The research is aimed at providing owners with a method of "appointment breeding" in which the time of breeding is precisely controlled and the need for estrus detection would be eliminated. However, prostaglandin is effective only in mares with a functioning corpus luteum on an ovary.

In addition, he explained that prostaglandin may have some short-term side effects—such as sweating or increased respiration rates—but that these symptoms should disappear after a half hour to an hour. The prostaglandin won't adversely affect a foal or a mare's future breeding ability.

According to Reitnour, CSU also is researching the use of progesterone compounds for estrus control. Such a compound could be added to a mare's ration and used early in the breeding season when mares may not be cycling normally.

Other methods that can be used to hasten the breeding season are artificial lighting and increased food intake for mares in thin condition.

Mares can be stimulated with light, according to Reitnour, beginning in November or December by putting a 200-watt bulb in a 12-by-12 foot stall. The combination of natural and artificial light should total 16 hours to which artificial light can be added in mornings, evenings or both.

Reitnour added that bringing mares into the breeding season on the thin side and then allowing them to gain weight may help them come into heat early. However, while this technique seems to hold

Grange okays reserve program

WASHINGTON, D. C. — The leader of the nation's oldest and second largest farm organization says he and his organization were pleased with the Secretary of Agriculture's announcement that a food reserve would be created out of the surpluses of wheat and rice. "A surplus is no longer a surplus when it becomes a part of a well-managed reserve program," John W. Scott, master of the National Grange said, "and we believe the Secretary is making the right moves by establishing a farmer-owned

and farm-stored food reserve program."

Scott believes that the wheat loan level should be raised above the present level, but not over \$2.75 per bushel if we are to remain competitive in world markets. "The loan level, plus the annual prepaid 20 cents per-bushel storage payment, will aid farmers in preventing a disastrous decline in farm income, especially if we continue to have favorable weather for the 1977 crop. At the same time it will keep stocks in the hands of farmers to meet consumer needs and export needs if we have unfavorable weather during the three-year period of the reserve-loan agreement," Scott added.

The Grange leader had met with the Secretary shortly after his confirmation and encouraged the Secretary at that time to establish a reserve program immediately by announcing a multiyear resale loan program for wheat, which would include a storage payment and forgiveness of interest payment, as a method of financially aiding wheat producers.

The Grange, in testimony before the Senate and House Agriculture Committees, had urged a higher loan rate for wheat and feed grains,

but Scott said, "We can understand the Secretary's and the Administration's concern, but we will work with Congress in arriving at the best set of guaranteed and loan support prices to meet the needs of American agriculture. We honestly hope," Scott concluded, "that the reserve program is so structured that all of the grain in storage does not come back on the market at one time, as has been

reported by some new sources. This would be worse disaster than prolonged lower market prices. We have submitted a plan that would let the market price increase determine the amount of grain that would be pulled from storage. This protects the farmer's market which he has stored for and assures the consumer of price stability, without the drastic swings."

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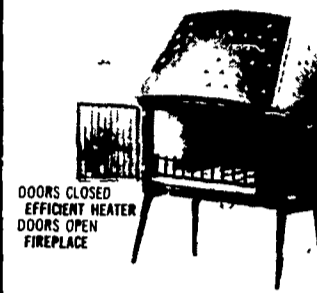
MEDIA, Pa. The 4-H Clubs of Delaware County will hold their annual Spring Fair on Friday and Saturday, April 22 and 23 at Granite Run Mall in Media. The fair will feature club exhibits and demonstrations on such topics as needle craft, sewing, rabbits, poultry, beekeeping and indoor gardening. There will be stage performances and a 4-H fashion show on Saturday. The event is free and open to the public.

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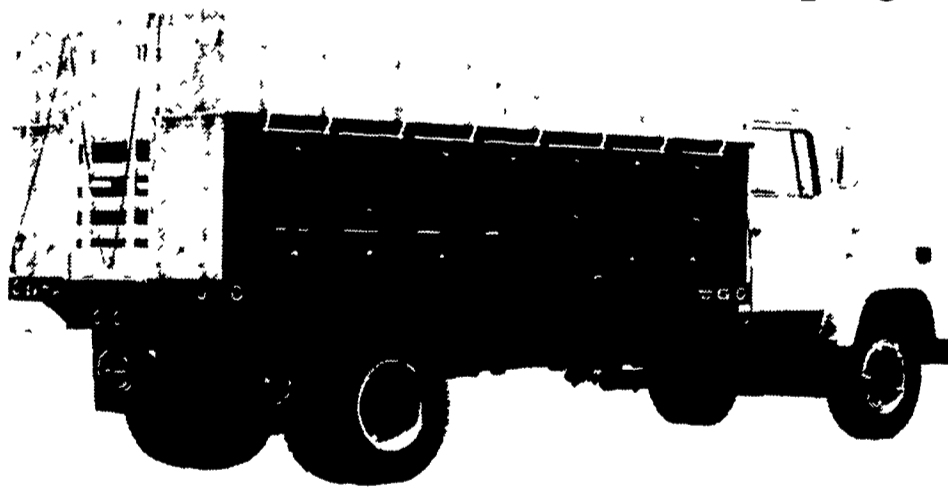
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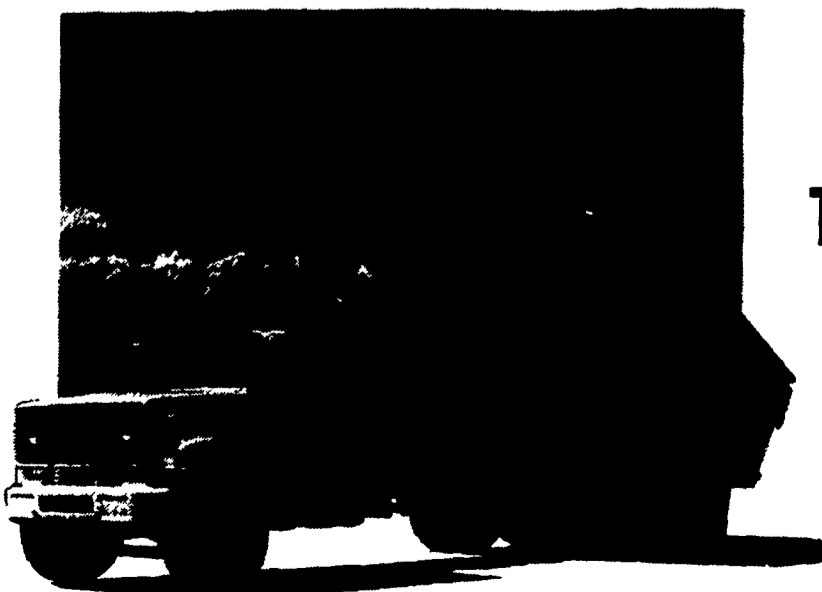
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