

Pseudorabies control measures recommended

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Control measures to combat pseudorabies should be initiated now to slow the spread of the disease, the U.S. Department of Agriculture advised last week.

Dr. F.J. Mulhern, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), outlined needed control measures to hog producers attending the Livestock Conservation Institute (LCI) annual meeting at Columbus, Ohio, May 10 - 11.

Mulhern explained that an all-out eradication program is not feasible at this time because of a number of factors. "Such an eradication program would be expensive," he said, "so we need to be sure of our facts before launching such an effort."

"We need to know more

about the amount and distribution of the disease," he continued. "We need to be sure we have a safe and effective vaccine. And finally, we need a quicker and more economical test. While we get this information," he added, "we must make sure we don't take steps that might jeopardize any future eradication effort."

According to Mulhern, recommended actions to be taken against pseudorabies now include the following:

- Determine the extent and location of infection nationwide. This could include a pilot program for testing boars for the disease, with follow-up investigations of reactor animals, along with establishment of systems within each state for reporting the disease and quarantine infected herds.
- Vaccinate infected herds

when USDA - licensed pseudorabies vaccines are available. Vaccination of exposed or surrounding herds would be carried out under guidelines set up by state animal health officials in each state.

- Establish procedures for cleaning up infected birds. This could be done through testing and isolation of negative animals, with retests of the isolated herd before animals could be shipped.

- Establish uniform methods and rules for herds to be officially recognized as pseudorabies negative. A herd would qualify for this status after all animals over six months old were tested and found negative. To maintain status, 25-per cent segments of the herd would have to be retested and found negative at three-month intervals.

- Carry out epidemiology in states with infection to learn more about the disease and how it spreads.

- Adopt state and federal shipping rules for all classes of swine.

- Conduct an information program about the disease and what producers can do to protect themselves.

- Carry out additional

research to develop a quicker and more economical test for pseudorabies, to develop vaccines, to study the disease in wildlife, and to develop chemical treatment for pseudorabies.

Outbreaks of pseudorabies - also called Aujeszki's disease or "mad itch" - have increased sharply in the last few years. More than 700 cases were confirmed in the laboratory in 1976, compared to only 125 in 1974.

The disease, caused by herpes virus, can cause death losses of up to 100 per cent in pigs less than two weeks old. After three weeks, young pigs usually develop some resistance to the disease and losses are considerably reduced. Since pseudorabies can occur in adult swine with few, if any, visible symptoms, hogs serve as a natural reservoir for the disease.

Swine can transmit pseudorabies to cattle and sheep, where it causes a fatal encephalomyelitis with signs of severe itching and self mutilation - hence the name "mad itch." The disease also affects dogs and cats and wildlife. Pseudorabies is not known to affect humans.

Egg ads scored

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Carol Foreman, assistant secretary of agriculture and former president of consumer Federation of America, expressed criticism of food commodity check-off advertising, but conceded the "Incredible Edible Egg" may play a role in regaining breakfast markets lost to cereal manufacturers.

At a briefing held here by egg industry leaders, Ms. Foreman said she was tired of her children telling her to buy different cereals and commented that the "Incredible Edible Egg" advertising did not personally appeal to her.

In the question and answer

period following her speech, she was challenged by Mike Hirth, AEB member, who said, "You just told us your children tell you what to buy. We all have children. We are losing the breakfast egg market to cereal people. These ads are aimed at getting our market back."

Ms. Foreman replied, "If you put it on that basis, I take back my criticism of the program."

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