

# Hoover's cattle loss frustrating, controversial

By DIETER KRIEG

**BAINBRIDGE** — Clair Hoover and his wife are concerned about a problem that they have on their farm. Some of their cattle have been dying and nobody seems to know exactly why. The conditions of the animals have been diagnosed and it has been established that the cause of death was a severe uterine infection. But there are believed to be underlying causes and that's what puzzles the Hoover family.

Although their farm is within the 5-mile radius of Three Mile Island, both Mr. and Mrs. Hoover are quick to point out that they are not blaming their problem on radiation. Hoover, a dairy farmer, even goes so far as to say that he was not and still is not anti-nuclear. But he is concerned about the effects Three Mile Island may have had on the area during its course of operation.

Although Hoover's alleged loss of 19 head of cattle (some other authoritative sources say it was just three head that died) made the headlines coast-to-coast, Hoover claims he is not the only one with mysterious livestock problems. Reports have been confirmed that several other farmers in both Lancaster and York Counties are experiencing nutritional and breeding problems with their animals. But nobody is saying much, or pointing accusing fingers. Hoover, who says he never sought the publicity that he has received, isn't sure what his herd health problem is. Neither are the investigators at this point.

Hoover does admit, however, that the thought of radiation affecting his cattle has crossed his mind. He says he would be the happiest man in the world to find out that the problem is something which his own management would correct.

But just in case his own management isn't at fault, then he's worried about what's really going on and if this might also affect others in the area.

Says Mrs. Hoover:  
"The financial losses we have suffered from losing cattle are disturbing, but what is really frightening is what this may have done to our children."

Hoover agrees and the couple has contemplated moving away from the farm. Some of Hoover's advisors have speculated that the problems would be solved if he moved away from the area.

Hoover claims that several other farmers have similar problems but few want to talk about it, for fear of generating publicity which would hurt their own marketing situations, as well as the industry as a whole.

Hoover and his wife say they are thoroughly tired of their ordeal - both emotionally and physically. The loss of cattle was bad enough. The publicity since then has been burdensome too. They had 35 reporters come to their farm earlier this week and correspondents are still inquiring daily. Newscasters are coming from around the world. Meanwhile, the Hoovers are trying to explain their problem and praying for recovery.

Acknowledging that the publicity from their farm and similar reports from others could hurt agricultural marketing, Hoover says he does not want to give farm products a negative slant. He opines that such fears are the underlying cause of why other farmers with similar problems are reluctant to step forward and talk.

The events of recent weeks, including the handling of the accident on Three Mile Island, have eroded their confidence in public officials considerably, noted Mrs. Hoover. Both say they are not sure whom or what to believe anymore.

While the Hoovers are having their problems and there are reports of similar cases in Lancaster and York Counties, (although none with the kind of animal loss as found at Hoover's dairy farm) some common and authoritative opinions indicate that it isn't likely that Three Mile Island has anything to do with any of the alleged livestock problems.

At a meeting in York on Thursday night, for example, any such notion was quickly dismissed by farmers with accusations of

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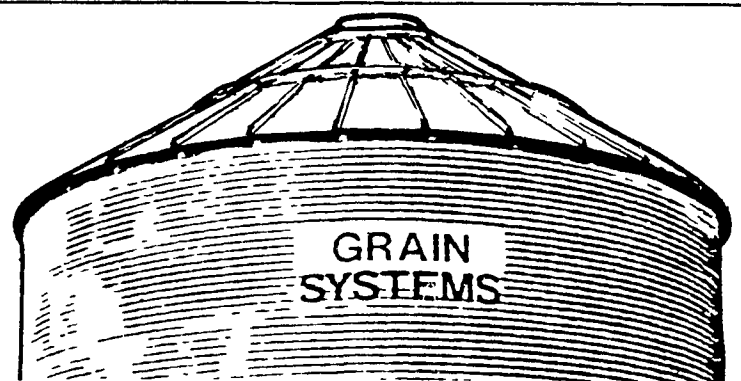
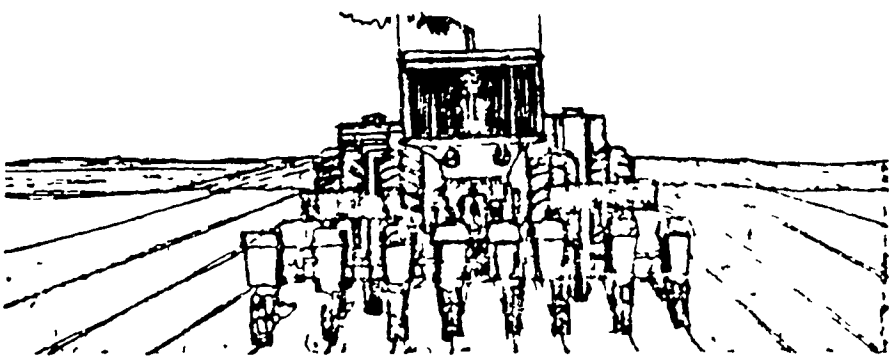


Clair Hoover says he is not blaming radiation for the problems he's having on his farm, located 4½ miles from the nuclear facility. He says simply: "We have problems, but no answers." He says he wants the truth.

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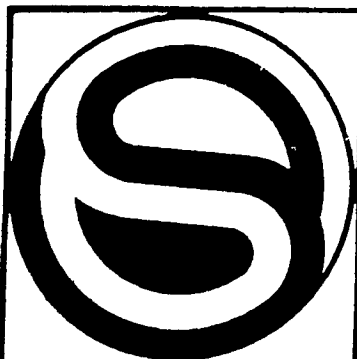


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