

USDA to offer dairymen new brucellosis indemnity plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Cattle producers and farmers are being asked by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to comment on a proposal that would revise the amount of indemnity paid to owners for cattle destroyed because of brucellosis.

Paul Becton, director of brucellosis eradication for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said the proposal would put indemnity payments on a sliding scale that would change according to the current market prices of replacement animals.

"This would greatly reduce the possibility of farmers or cattle producers receiving much less in total

compensation than the replacement costs," he said.

Becton said the proposal is based on recommendations of the Brucellosis Technical Commission. These recommendations were also endorsed by the U.S. Animal Health Association, which represents state animal health agencies and the livestock industry.

Brucellosis, also called Bang's disease, affects cattle and other livestock. It causes losses due to abortion, decreased milk yields and the need to buy replacement cattle.

Cattle that react to brucellosis blood tests must be branded with the letter "B" and sold to slaughter

within 15 days. In addition to the slaughter price, owners currently can receive federal indemnity payments up to \$250 for registered cattle, \$150 for grade dairy cattle and \$50 for grade beef animals. Some states also pay indemnities in addition to the federal payments.

Under the proposed system, federal indemnity rates would be adjusted periodically to accommodate changes in cattle prices. The rates would be adjusted so cattle owners would receive approximately 90 percent of the cost of replacing infected animals when combining the slaughter price, state indemnity and federal indemnity.

"Market prices are subject to change," said Becton. "Having brucellosis indemnity rates tied to the cost of replacing breeding stock should go a long way toward

preventing undue hardships now and in the future."

The proposal was published in the March 21 Federal Register. Written statements or comments

may be filed until April 21 with: Deputy Administrator, USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services, Federal Bldg., Room 805, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

(Continued from Page D4)

SENATE AG COMMITTEE:

Bills under consideration by the Pennsylvania Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, not yet placed on the calendar for consideration by the full House

SB 83	Holl/R/Lansdale	Amends clean and green to further define "agricultural reserve."	2-5-79
SB 101	Holl/R/Lansdale	Dog law amendment	2-5-79
SB 193	Kianbeck/R/Lebanon	Would promote family farms by establishing a family farm security program to encourage loans for purchase of real estate, and by creating a family farm advisory council	2-12-79
SB 251	Bell/R/Media	Would amend milk sanitation law to require Pa Secretary of Agriculture to accept inspections by local health departments	2-20-79
SB 253	Bell/R/Media	Would make changes to milk sanitation law related to sanitation, inspections, standards and labeling	2-20-79
SB 277	Stapleton/D/Indiana	Would authorize the creation of agricultural districts	2-20-79
SB 406	Jubelirer/R/Altoona	Dog law amendments	3-6-79
SB 953	Holl/R/Lansdale	Would amend clean and green to further define forest reserve, split-offs, or changes in use	9-18-79
SB 1253	Dwyer/R/Meadville	Would amend clean streams law to prohibit any government agency from requiring fencing along streams to keep livestock out of water	2-13-80
SB 1264	Stapleton/D/Indiana	Would amend Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to authorize agricultural districts	2-13-80
HB 1778	Honaman/R/Lancaster	Restricts alien ownership of Pennsylvania farmland to less than 100 acres	Passed Senate 3-18-80
HB 1794	Thomas/R/Snyder-Union	Protects farm operations from nuisance suits under certain conditions	2-25-80

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