

Franklin County cattle, hogs restricted after pesticide exposure

MERCERSBURG — The State Agriculture Department's Bureau of Animal Industry has restricted movement of cattle and hogs from 14 farms in the Mercersburg area.

State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hollowell said the action was taken strictly as a precautionary measure, after minute levels of chlordane were found in milk and feed samples.

The 14 farms may have been exposed to contaminated barley, purchased at Dietrich's Mill in Mercersburg after February 20.

Hollowell said these farms are the only farms which may have been exposed to the affected barley.

Chlordane, a pesticide used for termite control was initially discovered in milk and feed samples on March 7. An intensive investigation was launched by the Bureau of Plant Industry in cooperation with the Food and Drug Administration.

The investigation led in-

spectors to Dietrich's Mill, and from there to the Carl Stuff farm which has been identified as the source of the contaminated barley. Dietrich's Mill received 7230 pounds of barley from the Stuff farm on February 20.

Inspectors, working in cooperation with the mill manager, compiled a listing of farms which drew barley from the exposed bin. Milk and feed samples were taken from these farms, and where evidence of chlordane was found, the Department immediately stopped the sale of milk.

Hollowell said the Bureau of Foods and Chemistry is continuing to monitor milk samples.

All farms had been released from stop sale orders on Friday, March 21 — the milk showed less than 3/10 parts per million of chlordane, the FDA tolerance level. Hollowell said the milk had been released for sale after consultation with the FDA.

The precautionary quarantine on the farms restricts the farmers from moving their livestock. This action prevents the sale of livestock which may be carrying chlordane above tolerance levels (in fat tissue).

The farmers have several

options to secure release from the restriction. Animals may be sent to slaughter under permit from the Bureau of Animal Industry. A sample of carcass fat will be taken for testing, and the animal retained. If testing shows negative for chlordane, the quarantine

will be released.

The farmers may also request their veterinarian to obtain a fat biopsy from a representative sample of the herd. Again, if test results are negative, the restriction will be lifted.

If animals on the farm area not tested, the

quarantine will remain in effect until evidence suggests that chlordane has cleared the body fat.

Hollowell thanked all the individuals involved for their cooperation and concern, noting that the joint effort has "worked smoothly and effectively."

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