

Anaplasmosis

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the hard frosts we have every year," he stated. "The disease is more prominent in the southwest where the vectors, blood-sucking insects, aren't killed by the cold." According to a text on bovine medicine, by veterinarians W.J. Gibbons, J.J. Catcott, and J.F. Smithcors, anaplasmosis has been recognized for more than half a century as a disease of major economic importance to the cattle industry. They say anaplasmosis is

"an infectious and transmissible disease of cattle, characterized by progressive anemia".

Along with blood-sucking insects, like flies, mosquitos, and ticks, carrying the disease and infecting cattle, Dr. Carr pointed out the disease can be mechanically carried by man.

"If you are using dirty instruments when castrating calves or if you use the same needle when giving injections to several cattle, the blood of a positive animal can be carried to a healthy animal," he stated. Carr also noted the disease

can afflict most ruminants—that is deer, goats, and sheep.

One Adams County cattleman who is greatly concerned about what's being done to control the disease in Pennsylvania is Frank Darcey.

Last year, Darcey said, he had several cows that were diagnosed as having anaplasmosis.

Darcey said he knew something was wrong with several of his older cows when he noticed they looked "droopy" and stood along the fence with their heads down. He said the cows lost about 200 pounds and quit milking in a short period of time.

"When the veterinarian got to the farm and took blood samples, instead of being bright red, the cow's blood looked like pink champagne," he said.

In animals over 5 years old, Darcey pointed out, the stress on the cattle generally leads to death if it's not treated immediately.

In calves, he said, the animals appear sick for about a half hour and then they're fine. In two-year-olds, the animals look sick for about a half day, and then recover. But, once afflicted with the disease, these animals remain carriers unless they're treated, he added.

The treatment of anaplasmosis takes a lot of time and money, Darcey recalled. He said he treated his positive cattle with a drug that cost \$20 a bottle, and it took a 500 cc bottle to treat each cow.

Unfortunately, the drug, if given to a pregnant cow, will cause an abortion, and Darcey said he lost a calf bred to a top Polled Hereford bull last Fall.

After treatment, the cow will come back into her milk and will be able to nurse her calf at her side, he noted. The administered antibiotic will cure the animal, but it will be susceptible to getting the disease over again.

The treatment of anaplasmosis required a lot of handling and labor, said Darcey. "The shots hurt the cows when we were giving the injections in the leg muscles—we were giving 50 cc's twice a day. So, we switched and started giving them a 100 cc injection directly into the stomach,

after the veterinarian advised us it was okay."

Darcey said he had heard of a live virus vaccine, available in the Midwest but not allowed in Maryland and questioned in Pennsylvania, for the prevention of anaplasmosis. He said it involved a two shot series, administered to open cows.

The draw-back to the vaccine, he said, was that the whole herd had to be left unbreed until the two shot series was completed. And then, he added, it requires a booster shot every year.

Darcey's concern over anaplasmosis in his area is well founded because he said he knows of several farms where there were positive diagnoses of the disease. One farm, he said, had 98 out of 500 animals tested come back with positive results. This herd is not being treated, he said.

In still another case, Darcey stated, a herd of commercial cattle was entirely positive when tested. Since then, all of these cattle have been shipped out of the area.

"A number of people were trying to blame the death of these cattle on the fact that they were being fed apple pumice—but it was anaplasmosis," Darcey said.

Cattle have not been the sole species plagued with the disease. A veterinary source noted that there have been several mysterious deaths in the southwestern part of Adams County in sheep and goat herds.

After the goats had the specific card test done on their blood, they were

diagnosed as positive for anaplasmosis. A microscopic look at the blood turned up red blood cells that had the disease characteristics.

Several sheep have died suspiciously in the past year, too, noted the veterinarian.

It appears that anaplasmosis is a disease that is somewhat confined to Adams County's south western edge. But, said the source, a company that manufactures the vaccine for anaplasmosis from Fort Dodge, Iowa, has cited cases in other areas of the state.

What helps to spread the disease and hinders its control in Adams County, is the resident deer populations. The deer are protected on land owned by the national park in Gettysburg.

After the outbreak of anaplasmosis in the Gettysburg area last year, a spokesman for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture stated, a special team was sent to run a surveillance of the area to watch for any spread of the disease. Farmers were offered free testing services by PDA, he said.

The first case was identified October 19, 1979 stated Dr. John Dick, a PDA veterinarian in charge of cattle. A total of 38 herds were tested with some reactors showing up in a couple of herds.

The last reported case of the disease was recorded on January 30, 1980.

Dr. Dick stated that as far as PDA was concerned the

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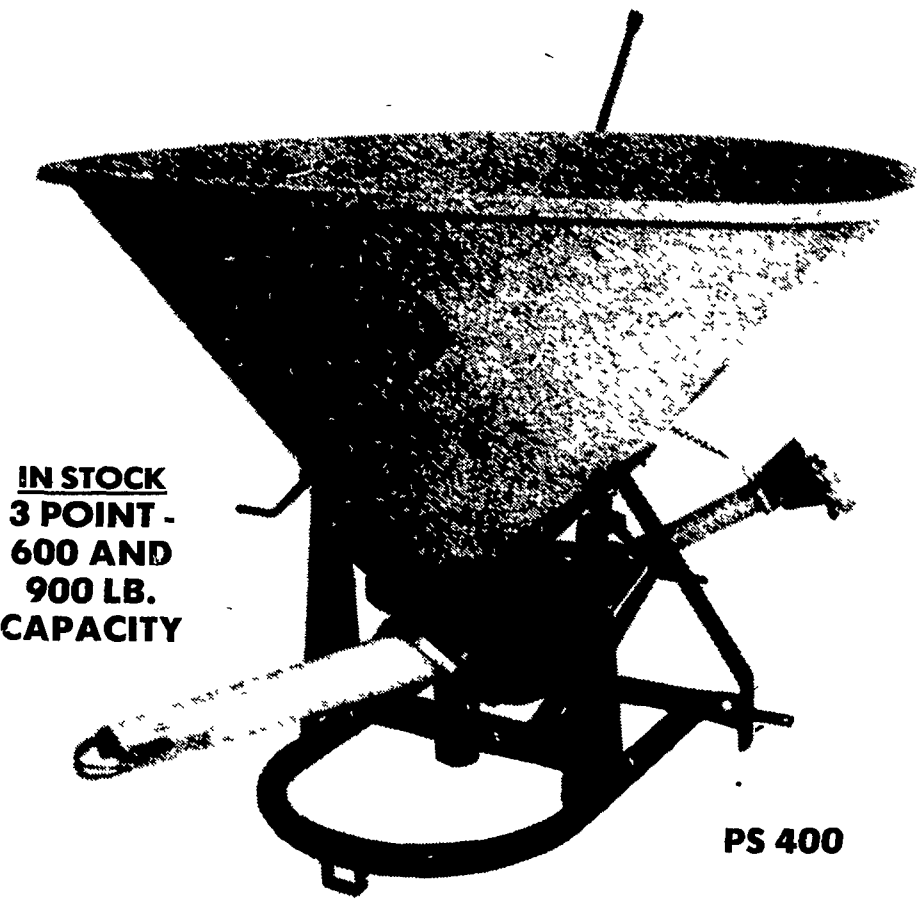
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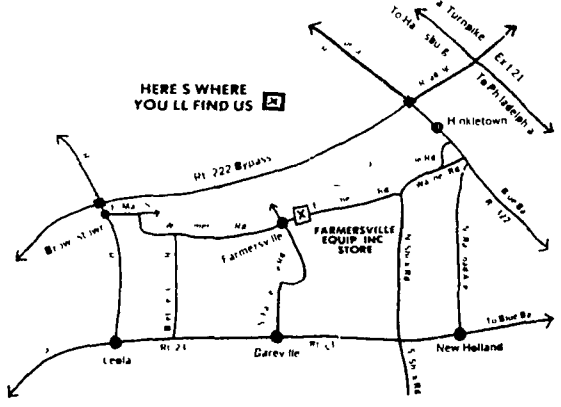
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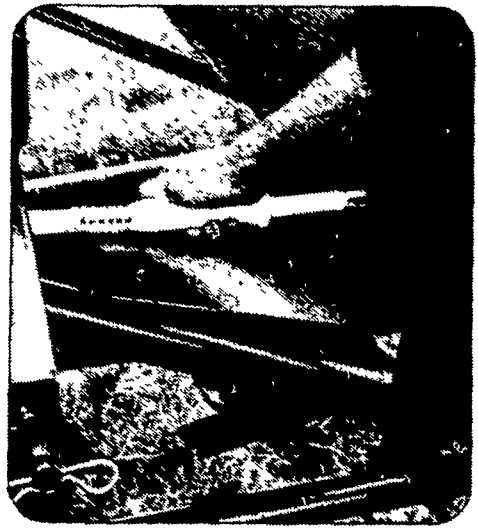
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