

Farm Bureau supports national bargaining bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A U.S. House Agriculture subcommittee Friday began assessing testimony, presented by a score of witnesses at a field hearing in Sacramento, which gave heavy support to a proposed National Agricultural Bargaining Act, HR 3535.

The legislation, sponsored by Congressman Leon Panetta and others, is designed to provide farmers and their bargaining associations with more "clout" in negotiating with the nation's handlers and buyers of food. Under provisions of the bill, the U.S. Department of Agriculture would act as a mediator in arbitrating bargaining disputes.

Speaking on behalf of the American Farm Bureau Federation as well as his own state, California Farm Bureau leader, Henry J. Voss, told the Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Information and Nutrition, that the trend of mergers in the food business makes it "no longer possible for the individual farmer — one on one — to sell to the man who owns the cannery or food processing firm.

"In the 1970's," Voss declared, "the multinational corporations took over the canning fruit industry. For example, Del Monte is owned and controlled by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and Libby's is owned by Nestle. A similar story could be told for most of the 200-plus commodity industries in California."

Robert Krug, president of the Washington State Potato Growers and an active member of Farm Bureau in that state, testified that there are some 300 potato producers here who must negotiate now with seven of the nine potato processors available in Washington and two counties of Oregon.

Krug said the existing federal law known as the Agricultural Fair Practices Act set the most favorable climate for HR 3535 but, in itself, is not

sufficient to help growers help themselves because it has no enforcement provisions or machinery for negotiation of binding agreements. The new legislation, he said, would give producers an even break in the bargaining process.

An Ohio Farm Bureau board member and vegetable producer, Ralph Gillmor, submitted testimony for the subcommittee record showing that he was forced to retire from tomato production in his state because the buyers would only purchase two-thirds of the 30-ton-per-acre crop he produced after he headed a state tomato growers association and campaigned in behalf of the Agriculture Fair-Practices Act.

He said the processors

"have ways of controlling delivery, grading, etc. Sweetheart contracts were and still are very prevalent in our area to keep non-members from joining the growers association."

Others who supported the bill represented California producers of apricots, peaches, pears, walnuts, olives, tomatoes and a number of other vegetable crops.

The subcommittee was urged by William Thomas, executive vice president of the California Food Producers, Inc. (an advocacy arm for bargaining cooperatives) to conduct further field hearings throughout the nation.

Farm Bureau has made a request for similar hearings to be held in the Northeast, Midwest and South.

Twin Valley parliamentary team wins Berks contest

ELVERSON — Eight members of the Twin Valley FFA Chapter cooperated to win the Berks County FFA Parliamentary Procedure Contest recently.

Members of the winning Twin Valley team were president Howard Griest, vice-president Lewis Kohl, secretary Linda Robinson, treasurer Don Stoltzfus, reporter Tom Hornberger, sentinel Nelson Beam, chaplain Steve Kearns, and junior advisor Diane Stoltzfus.

Conrad Weiser FFA chapter placed second with David Stauffer as president; Ernest Gelsinger, vice-president; Henry Noss, secretary; Sue Gromis, treasurer; Deb Miller, reporter; Kim Bauman, chaplain; Charles Nolt,

sentinel, and Kevin Satzahn as junior advisor.

Kutztown FFA team placed third with Keith Flicker as president; Bruce Latschaw as vice-president; Bill Zollers as secretary, Dean Shoemaker as treasurer; Dan Adams as reporter; Mark Latschaw as sentinel; Richard Savidge as chaplain; and Dean Bruno as junior advisor.

Twin Valley and Conrad Weiser teams are now eligible to participate in the area FFA contest against teams from Lebanon and Schuylkill counties.

Judges for the county contest were Robert Kramer from F.M. Browns in Sinking Springs and Clyde Myers, Associate Berks County Agent.

Quarantine

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quarantine until lab testing shows they can be released."

Dr. Cable said there is still no clue as to the original source for the introduction of the disease into Pennsylvania after a six-year absence.

"This is still one of the big puzzles," he said.

Initial symptoms of pseudorabies are sneezing and coughing, followed by high temperature and dullness. As the virus

manifests, animals show signs of trembling, incoordination, convulsions and eventually death.

The fatality rate is much higher among baby pigs than in weanlings, which usually recover if they live past the sixth day.

Carried by swine, pseudorabies is very contagious among other animals, such as cattle, sheep, birds, dogs, cats and some wild species. It is

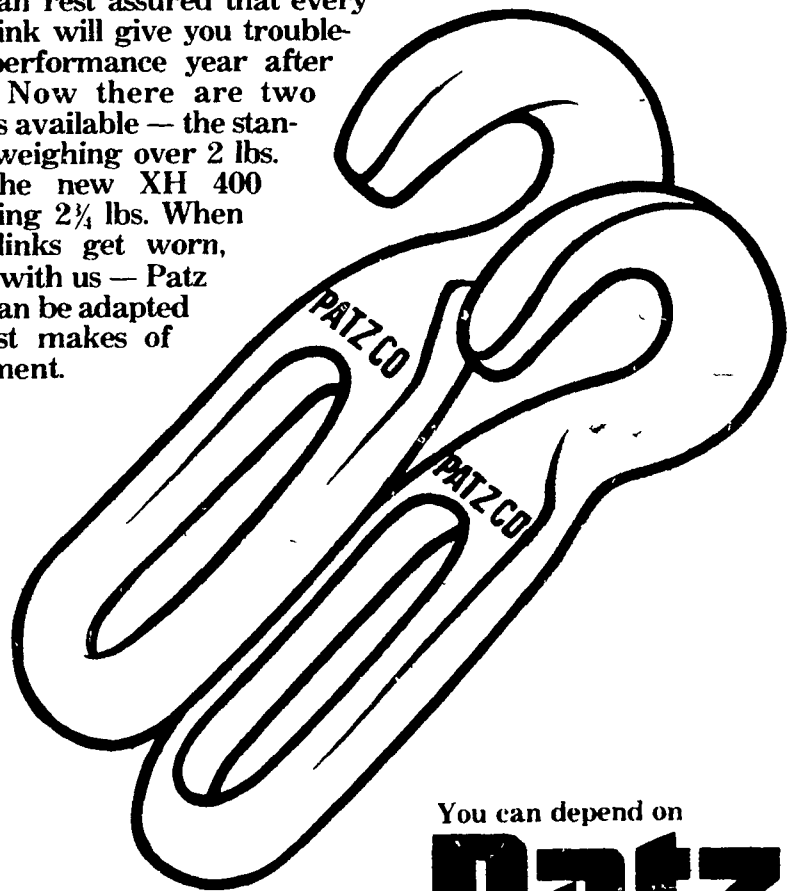
usually fatal in these other animals in 36 to 48 hours.

It is not contagious to humans and there is no danger in eating pork, according to Dr. Cable.

Protective measures to be taken, Dr. Cable said, include keeping swine and cattle separated, purchasing swine from qualified pseudorabies tested herds only, isolating and testing replacements and new additions before introducing them to the herd and contacting a veterinarian immediately if any unexplained symptoms are seen in a swine herd.

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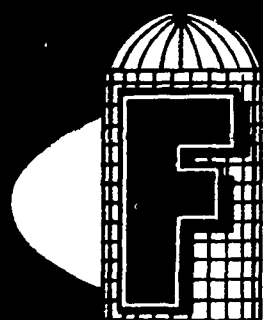
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