

Ask the VMD

Leon Riegel

Tim Trayer Edgar Sheaffer

If you have a question you would like answered by the team from Valley Animal Hospital, send it to Ask the VMD, Box 366, Lititz, Pa. 17543. Questions will be kept anonymous on request.

Haphazard implant hazards
A reader asks:

I am planning to implant my steers this year. Please explain the best time and procedure for doing this. Are there any places in the ear to avoid or any other hazards?

Dr. Trayer comments:

The best time to implant your feeder cattle is when you are restraining them for the purpose of castrating, worming or dehorning.

However, keep in mind that a stressed animal should not be implanted. Give stressed animals two to three weeks to recover from the trauma of shipping or weaning.

There are many different types of implants available. In all instances, read the directions thoroughly and obey all written withdrawal requirements.

Presently DES has been withdrawn from the market and probably will not be reintroduced. This product should not be used as an implant at the present time.

The only implant that I commonly use on steers, bulls and heifers (only if not planned for breeding) is Ralgrow. The active ingredient is a natural hormone, zearolenone, which so far has not shown any problems in laboratory testing for carcinogenic effects.

All implants require a certain number of days of withdrawal, but cattle can be reimplanted if they will not be marketed within the specified amount of time. Ralgrow has a withdrawal recommendation of approximately 65 days. I usually recommend that the cattle be reimplanted every 65 days until they are within 70 days of market, and then the implant is allowed to wear off.

The desired effect of an implant is to increase the rate of gain or feed efficiency, depending on what product is implanted.

No implant is of any value unless it is properly placed. Ralgrow recommends the back part of the ear be used, approximately one inch from the base of the ear in a place where the skin is very movable. Also, it should be located between blood vessels — never injected directly into the vessel.

Application requires a sharp, hollow-tubed needle that is attached to a plunger device. This pushes the

pellet of implant material under the skin.

The most common mistakes made when applying an implant are:

—putting the capsule into the cartilage. The capsule then is poorly absorbed because there is only a limited vascular supply reaching it.

—injecting into a vessel, where the hormone is

rapidly absorbed and does not give the desired duration effect.

—crushing the pellet when it's being injected or right after it's in place which also increases the absorption rate.

—drawing the pellet back out along with the needle at which point it falls on the ground.

—using outdated material

or products that were not stored properly. Implants require a cool, dry storage place out of the sun and high humidity which reduce its effectiveness.

Clean technique should be used during the implant process. The ear should be scrubbed and cleaned with alcohol — along with the injection 'gun'. This will help to reduce the chances of transmitting diseases from one animal to another and also helps prevent abscesses at the injection site.

Now you're ready for the implant to be applied. The needle is slid under the skin. Then the apparatus should be withdrawn about 1/8 inch before pushing the plunger to deposit the pellet. Carefully withdraw the

needle and hold your finger over the hole to make sure the pellet is capsulated under the skin in a movable part — not in the vessel or cartilage.

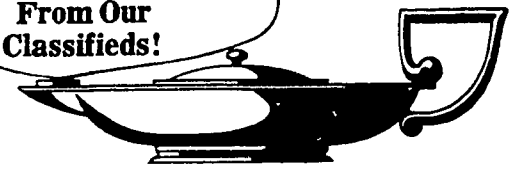
If an implant is made by 'mistake', your veterinarian should cut the implant out so that if the animal is sold before the withdrawal date, there is no chance of any residue.

Implants should be properly handled. If you have not been implanting, you should obtain professional advice from your local veterinarians.

Follow their recommendations and explanations rather than going out and experimenting on your own only to find the end results far from satisfactory.

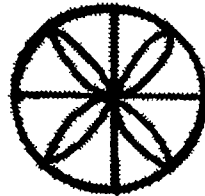
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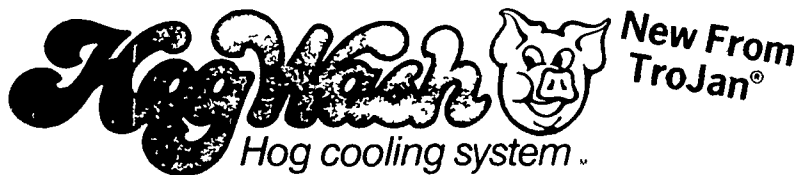
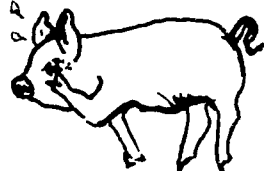


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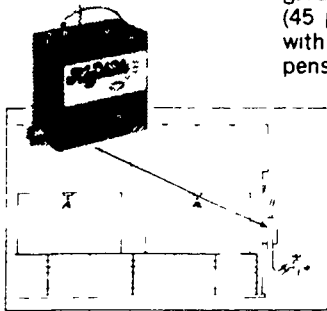
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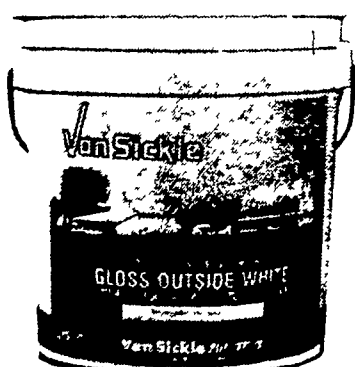
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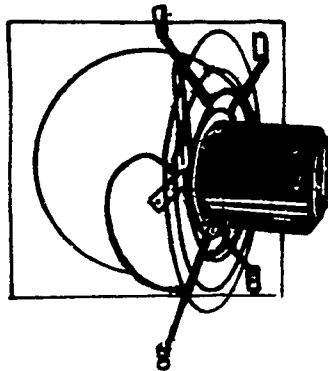
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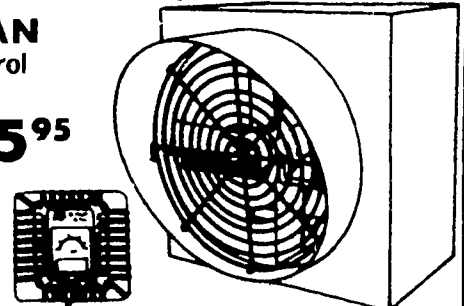
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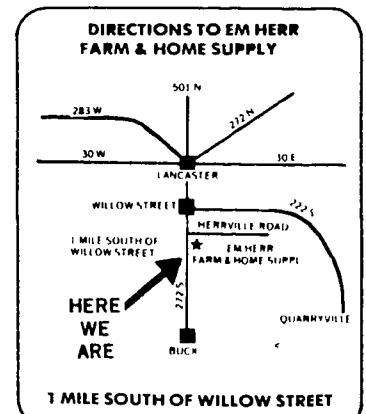
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