

Sheep team

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Five years ago, Etzler worked with a team, and did teach them to pull a wagon. The wagon and harnesses are all custom made. Besides raising sheep for 22 years, Etzler works for a manufacturing corporation which specializes in heavy cargo-containing equipment. Etzler persuaded the business to make his harnesses and made the wagon bed, while his

brother-in-law designed the wagon's running gear.

Etzler has a six sheep hitch (three teams) that are trained to pull the wagon and a team that is just learning to pull at two-years old. The lead team, featuring "Margie" and "Patty" are the original team and the most important.

"These two ewes are five years old and weigh about 175 pounds each," Etzler explained. "The wheel team is important too, as they

control the wagon. The wheel team consists of "Debbie" and "Marian", four year old twins."

The swing team features Jacqueline and Jennifer who are three years old. The spare team, two years olds, also make up the eight team hitch. The spare team carries the family tradition as Deborah is the daughter of Debbie who is in the wheel team, and Tabitha is the sister to Jacqueline, of the swing team.

Etzler trains only females to pull, starting them off when a year old. "The ewes look better when performing and to date they have participated in more than 35 parades and six county fairs."

The team has also performed at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky for the last two years.

Etzler breeds the ewes each year, and their lambing record has been quite good. The lead team is not bred, however, because Etzler likes to always have them in driving condition.

Etzler and his wife Marilyn, who have three children, live on an eight acre farm, just outside of Van Wert, Ohio, with a flock of 31 Hampshire and Dorset ewes. Their youngest son Dan, is an active participant of his family's hobby, as he helps with the teams and does some of the driving himself.

Marilyn enjoys working with the sheep too.

"I help with the sheep — but, I'm more of a behind the scenes person," she said. "Sheep are very personable animals. Our's are a little

Pork producers ask revision in food safety standards

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The government's recent reversal of its two year campaign against nitrites has led the National Pork Producers Council to call for a major overhaul of food safety evaluation procedures.

Testifying before the House Agriculture Committee Nitrite Review Tuesday, NPPC President Bill Buller stated, "With the Nitrite-Newberne Study controversy being put in perspective, it is imperative that we deal with food safety procedures. Errors as we have just experienced do not

spoil, however, because they don't like to mingle with the rest of the sheep when we put them in the barn for the winter.

"We enjoy travelling to different areas of the country and watching the reactions of people who have never seen sheep pulling a wagon. The sheep are so gentle that we allow people to pet them when they are not performing," she said.

"We're looking forward to coming to Harrisburg October 3-4 to help celebrate Pennsylvania Livestock Month, and to kick-off the Keystone International Livestock Exposition. We hope that everyone will be able to come and see the team perform without any use of bits in their mouths. Even the Clydesdales can't do that."

only cost industry, they cost consumers. That's bad government that cannot be condoned."

The hearing was called to review the Food and Drug Administration's and United States Department of Agriculture's treatment of nitrite. Nitrite is used in the curing process to protect consumers from food poisoning. Nitrite — is especially important to the pork industry where 70% of all pork is cured, with a value of \$13 billion.

On August 11, 1978, FDA and USDA proposed a phase-out of nitrite based on a rat study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Two years later, on August 19, 1980, the agencies announced that the pivotal MIT study had been proven wrong and nitrites were not show to be carcinogens. Since the announcement, there has been growing momentum among Congressional leaders for reform of food safety laws.

Calling the current system "outdated" and incapable of preventing mishap and abuse, the pork producer stressed, "now is the time to mandate proper performance monitoring and adequate review of results before an investigator's tentative conclusions are publicized or used as the basis for regulatory initiative."

"Congress should make clear that food safety, like transportation, en-

vironmental or any other kind of safety, is a matter of reasonableness," said Buller, "the discovery of an infinitesimal trace of a suspected carcinogen should begin rather than end the regulatory inquiry."

Although the government retraction regarding nitrites overcomes a major hurdle, the National Pork Producers Council has not closed the door on the way agency officials handled the nitrite situation. The Council is researching damages done to product image and is calling for government to make every effort to remove the cloud of suspicion left hanging over the red meat industry.

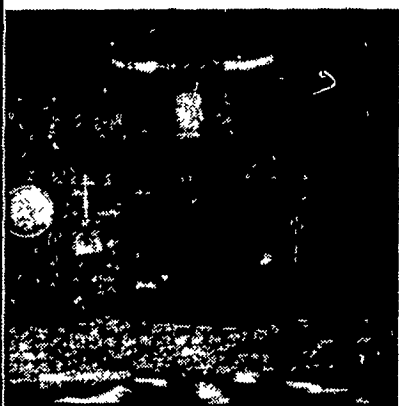
Buller said, "We have communicated with President Carter, Health and Human Services Secretary Patricia Harris, and USDA Secretary Bob Bergland asking that they inform us of their plans to repair damage done and rebuild consumer confidence in nitrite cured products. We have not heard from them yet."

"Producers and consumers deserve an answer," concluded Buller.

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