

Bangs indemnity

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perienced the devastating effects of brucellosis in his dairy herd — milk production and abortion fortunately only 2 cases.)

King said he blames the disease which is now out-of-control in his herd on several cows he purchased last April. Prior to these cows entering his barn, King claims his blood tests were always negative for brucella abortus.

According to King, the cows in question came to his farm from New York.

"The cows were sold to a farmer by a dealer named Mendell," King said. "Mendell was found to be bleeding bulls and putting the tests with tags from cows — that's now he got his health papers."

"Now, I understand, Mendell has been fined \$50,000 by the state government and has had his dealership license taken away. And, I can get on the bottom of a waiting list of 15 other farmers who already have law suits against him pending — but what good would that do me?"

King explained he purchased the cattle from Glenn Fite, a dealer from Quarryville, who purchased the cattle from the New York farmer.

Three months later, King found reactors in his milking string. And, since last July, only 4 of his cattle that freshened didn't test positive — 39 were reactors.

"I have an Agway wheel, and I could chart the cattle through their

pregnancy. You could count on them going down either when they were 5 months pregnant or 1 to 2 weeks after freshening," King observed.

King confessed his soul-trying battle against the disease since last July has been a complicated mess the whole way through.

"If you want to eradicate a disease, you have to act faster than the state does — but I guess you can't change the state," he claimed.

The bureaucratic red tape and testing "sure didn't help" him control the brucellosis outbreak, he said.

The unfortunate dairyman explained after the disease was identified initially, the state's Bureau of Animal Industry people spent four months on testing and culling individual reactors as the disease swept through his barns.

"What bugs me is their procedure is too slow," said King. "They'd come out on a Tuesday, and, that Friday or the following Monday, they'd identify the positive cows. Then it would take until Thursday or Friday for them to get the truck in from Baums. And, the disinfecting wouldn't be completed until the next Thursday or Friday. So there you have 3 weeks gone already."

"They kept on doing this from July to November. I told them we weren't going to get rid of it this way."

"I asked the Bureau of Animal

Industry's laboratory to call me the day the test results showed the positive cows and I told them I'd bring the cattle to Lansdale the same day."

King's voice sounded with desperation as he exclaimed, "I've only got 26 milking cows left out of my original 75, and they've told me to stop raising 11 yearlings, along with the 52 heifers I have bred to come in this summer."

"I'm going in debt — the brucella always took my fresh cows. I'm down to 940 pounds of milk a day — that won't even pay the feed costs."

And, adding salt to the wound, King said the state has told him he may only get \$420 a piece for his bred heifers under the indemnity program.

The BAI team visited the farm last Monday to make their appraisal. But, said King, they are waiting for the butchers to come out to say what they'll pay for meat.

State and federal brucellosis indemnity programs, designed to take the chopping block effect of the disease off the farmer's neck, have not dulled the bite. This problem has taken out of the King operation, unfortunately.

Although King has received funds from the federal and state level under the individual reactor program, he has been unable to receive financial assistance in depopulating his entire herd in an effort to clean up and start over again.

King explained he was told the only federal funds remaining in the \$250,000 brucellosis indemnity

budget are \$52,000 for individual reactors. This amount, which seems like a drop in the milk bucket, must be divided between 19 states, he added. He noted the state program does have indemnity money available.

Because the federal monies have all been spent for the whole herd eradication program, King said he volunteered to liquidate his herd in January and had been approved for a loan from Hamilton bank to buy more cows and get back into business. In return, he asked for financial assistance once it would become available during the 1982 Fiscal Year.

King pointed out he received no response favoring his proposal, but noted the state did give him three options:

- ✓ Hire a lawyer and sue the federal government for the indemnity funds,

- ✓ Buy-in animals and keep going,

- ✓ Sell the entire herd for slaughter, taking what money he can get from the state.

To the first two options, King has said an emphatic "no."

"That would be like trying to fight City Hall — they're so much bigger than I am. Besides, I'm a Christian and the Bible doesn't

teach us to live like that. And, as for buying-in, I'd never get rid of the problem."

King is adamant about getting rid of his brucellosis problem. He said he will be getting rid of his bred heifers, even though they were vaccinated against the disease, rather than taking a chance. He firmly said he doesn't want to be a threat to his neighbors.

And brucellosis vaccinations don't help 100 percent, he said, they're only guaranteed for 65 percent protection — another strike against us.

King said the state has estimated his losses for the cattle he has left to be around \$58,000. What it will cost him to get back into business after depopulation he said is a \$64 question.

"If it wasn't for our potato crop, I don't know what I'd be doing," he mused.

King said he plans to watch the cattle market after he cleans up his barn. He is required to wait a minimum of 35 days after disinfecting before repopulating.

There's usually a lot of milk in April and May, King said with a glimmer of optimism, which might mean lower cattle prices. But good cows always sell high.

Dauphin County Board meeting

The Dauphin County Farm Women Board met recently at the Elizabethville Methodist Church. Thirteen groups were represented.

Members were reminded that county dues are due April 1.

The state quilting project and the Spring Rally at Dickinson College were recognized and discussed.

The June meeting will be held at Grantville Fire Hall.

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