

## Indemnity cupboard almost bare

LITITZ — Brucellosis, or Bang's disease, is a bacterial disease which costs farmers about \$45 million dollars annually, according to the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service of USDA.

Despite the expense of this disease and its devastating effects on farmers, especially dairy producers, the federal and state indemnity budgets still fall short of even beginning to cover the costs.

The 1981 Fiscal Year appropriations for the federal program amounted to \$19 million. These total dollars had to be spread out among all states and between both the whole herd depopulation indemnity and the individual reactor indemnity programs.

The whole herd indemnity was given \$2 million when the funds finally were released by Congress last December, two months into the Fiscal Year. But the money fund totally depleted by mid-January, according to Paul Becton, director of the national brucellosis eradication program.

In the northeast region, Becton pointed out, there still remain funds for individual reactor indemnity payments for claims made prior to cattle slaughter — around \$52,000 worth — but these funds must be shared between 19 states.

Becton noted the federal program does not discriminate against states who run out of funds early. He explained the monies can be redistributed until they are totally paid out. However, more states are asking for additional funds than those who have more than they need.

In a conversation Wednesday with APHIS's northeast director in New York, Becton said the region head stated he has kept a small reserve for whole herd depopulation indemnities — enough to pay for about a half dozen animals. Otherwise, the whole-herd kitty is empty.

Becton stated there is a push in Washington to convince Congress to appropriate more funds for the brucellosis indemnity program. Chances of more dollars being made available are slim, he confessed, because the Reagan Administration is tightening up the budget.

Becton pointed out the benefits of the indemnity program are two-fold:

It allows the owner to get out of a tough problem and get back in business after clean-up;

It removes the threat of infection.

The APHIS official stated his department was aware of the David King situation (front page story), and noted the dairyman could recover some of his expenses by salvaging the cattle and taking the individual reactor indemnity payments.

"We are concerned about this kind of herd," he concluded.

Echoing his superior's accounting of the indemnity budget was Dr. John Moore, chief veterinarian for APHIS in Harrisburg.

He said the King herd qualifies for total herd liquidation, but there are no funds for this type of indemnity.

Moore explained King has received payments under the individual indemnity program since brucellosis was discovered in his herd last July. But, said Moore, King was fighting a losing battle with the disease — he's elected not to fight it cow by cow.

Conjecturing on how the animals carrying brucellosis managed to get through the stringent health regulations governing interstate livestock sales, Moore stated:

Brucellosis has a long incubation period before any laboratory or clinical signs are detected. It could take a year for any recognizable symptoms to crop up.

"The animal could be exposed to the bacteria, test negative, and could be a reactor in several weeks to several months. Exposure doesn't mean an animal will test positive — the disease could be incubating in the host."

The APHIS veterinarian noted the bacteria causing the disease, brucella abortus, is 99.9 percent ingested, entering the host through the mouth. He said the bacteria can be found in troughs, other cattle, pastures, drinking water, and other areas around the barn. The bacteria's viability outside the host depends on temperature, light, and humidity.

When asked if the bacteria could survive the intense disinfection program carried out by the state's Bureau of Animal Industries personnel, Moore stated it could be "theoretically possible but practically improbable for it to survive." He noted that the thorough disinfection requires the removal of all organic matter in the contaminated area and the application of a bactericide.

Moore said he recognized the

problem surrounding King's claims for indemnity assistance as being serious, and said APHIS and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture have assisted King in exploring routes for funding.

"Unfortunately, there are a lot of Mr. Kings in a lot of different states," he concluded.

In Pennsylvania, which is considered to be a brucellosis-free state, there are still seven herds quarantined because of the disease. These herds are located in the southeast, in Chester, Berks, Lebanon, and Lancaster counties.

During the 1980-81 Fiscal Year, the state has already paid out \$85,000 in indemnities, leaving \$20,000 in the pot to be divided

among claims for not only brucellosis, but tuberculosis and John's disease.

According to a PDA spokesperson, "There are a lot of claims for the remaining funds, and no decision has yet been made on King's claim."

According to Dr. John Dick, of the Bureau of Animal Industry, the maximum indemnity the state will pay on an individual reactor is \$1000. This fee is 67 percent of the animal's appraised value.

He pointed out additional funds, up to 90 percent of the appraised value, can be obtained through the federal program and through salvage.

"If King goes through with the

voluntary depopulation," said BAI Chief Veterinarian Max Van-Buskirk, "PDA has agreed to process his claim as if there was federal approval for the depopulation and funds. The state approved the depopulation on January 6."

"Of course there are no guarantees. If no federal funds are available, the state may decide to pay for the reactors sent to slaughter. And, we might decide to pay for the depopulation up to 67 percent of the appraised value."

So, despite the lack of funds on the brucellosis indemnity shelf at the present time, there is still a glimmer of hope that David King may find some financial help in getting back on his feet.



Avalong Astro Martha Margo brought \$1700 to the top Adams-York Calfarama '81 sale Tuesday. From left are Larry Amspacher, for the seller; Melvin Marks; Barbara Kilgore and C. Robert Kilgore, buyers; leadsman Billy Jo Heath; and, in the box, sales manager Doty Rensburg.

## Astronaut daughter tops Adams-York Calfarama

YORK — Avalong Astro Martha Margo, a September heifer by Paclamar Astronaut, topped the Adams-York Calfarama '81 sale, held Tuesday evening at Avalong Farms.

Margo sold to C. Robert Kilgore, Arville R2, for \$1700.

She's from an Elevation dam with three and four-year-old records over 19,000 of milk and 800 of fat. Sale host Avalong Farms

consigned the top selling calf.

Second-high seller at \$1525 was Sunnybend Fifi Triple Mars, purchased by Daniel Albright, Landisburg.

A December calf, she's from a Triple-Threat Red daughter, with a VG-86 granddam by Samson with records over 24,000 milk. Consignor was Sunnybend Farms, York.

A Marvex yearling, Hickorymea

Marvex Dahla, took the third-high price at \$1400, selling to Kuldee Fram, Chesapeake City, Maryland.

The April heifer was consigned by T. Edwin Johnson, Arville, and is from a GP-83 dam by Citation R Maple, with records over 20,000 milk.

A total of 416 head sold, averaging over \$875.



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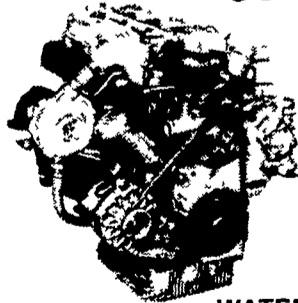


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