

Pa. Jersey Cattle Club meets



Officers elected at the Pa. Jersey Cattle Club's annual meeting were president Joseph Shields; vice president, Bob Robison; secretary, Florence Robison; and second vice president Craig Rhien.



Receiving trophies for high cow at the Pennsylvania Jersey Cattle Club's annual meeting April 11, were Clyde and Bob Robison, Coal Center, and for high herd, Gerry and Dick Moose of New Wilmington.



Pennsylvania's Jersey queen, Karla Martin from Chambersburg, stands with alternate Marilyn Deaven, Fredericksburg, and Mrs. Gerald Moose, R2, New Wilmington.



Placing for high milk herds are Eugene Harris, Gerry Moose and Dr. Robert Driesbach. Photos by Leslie Firth.

BAI vets defend emergency plan

HARRISBURG — State veterinarians John Cable and Max VanBuskirk testified in front of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board recently to inform all parties involved in the controversy of restarting the Unit 1 reactor at Three Mile Island about the Commonwealth's Disaster Operations Plan.

The Commonwealth's plan identifies the Department of Agriculture as the lead state agency, working with USDA, in guiding counties and agricultural communities in plans and actions in the event of radioactive contamination.

The plan was developed and published after TMI-2 and was revised this past February.

In his testimony to the board on April 8, Dr. Cable said, in the event of a nuclear emergency, the state has no plans for an overall evacuation of livestock found on the 90 to 95 farms within a 5 mile area of TMI. The decision to evacuate would come from the Secretary of Agriculture.

He pointed out the state has a network or agreement with USDA and other federal agencies for emergency animal disease control programs for any type of emergency.

When asked if an animal that has been radiated poses a threat to the farmer or caretaker, Cable stated, "External radiation to the animal would pose no threat to the farmer. You may have particulate matter

in the fur which could cause additional hazards to the farmer."

Concerning dairy cattle that might miss milkings if an accident involving Unit 1 should occur, Dr. VanBuskirk explained the udder of the cow would become congested for a few days, but gradually the fluids would be reabsorbed and the udder would become dry.

Claims were made by area farmers that mastitis would result, along with other physical stress to the cattle (See front page story). These same farmers claimed the state's emergency plan is impractical.

Responding to this contention, VanBuskirk stated, "The planned protective actions for livestock emphasize sheltering and the use of feed and water that has been protected from contamination."

The guidance takes into consideration the tolerance livestock have to the effects of low level radiation and it minimizes exposure on the part of the farmer during the release of radioactive material.

The plan calls for coordination at the local level through the efforts of Extension personnel and advises farm operators to report their status and the status of livestock to them in case of an emergency.

If the need to evacuate people from the area becomes necessary, VanBuskirk stated the Commonwealth can assist in arranging for livestock care. And if the situation worsens, the evacuation

of livestock would be made on a case to case basis.

"...We will not attempt to evacuate immediately because of logistical problems and because of the problems related to confining disease to the original problem area," he said.

"The mingling of livestock and sharing of equipment enroute to and at relocation sites increases the chances of exposure to dangerous transmissible diseases, like brucellosis, tuberculosis, mastitis and pseudorabies."

The plan calls for minimum exposure to radiation for both people and livestock through preparation. It suggests survival rations be stored in barns to keep livestock fed and watered for 48 hours. And equipment and emergency generators should be located inside to prevent the farmer from having to be exposed to unnecessary risks.

Fact sheets describe minimum ventilation needed for livestock to survive so windows and openings can be closed with bales of hay or sacks of grain, explained Robert Furrer, emergency management coordinator for PDA.

"If you continue to ventilate full time with fans you'll be pulling everything in from the outside air, lessening the shielding provided by the barn," he said. "There is always the risk of too little ventilation — the farmers must choose between the two risks, radiation or ventilation."

Tables for radiation levels and their effects on livestock are listed in the plan starting at 500 rads, a measure of the radioactivity per unit of time. According to Furrer, the radiation level during TMI-2 never reached 1 rad.

Furrer said the assistance during a disaster depends on government and its responsibility.

Furrer and a PDA spokesman said after TMI-2, the Department visited farms in the area and

listened to experiences and feelings of farmers and local veterinarians.

"PDA is not pro or con for nuclear plants," Furrer concluded. "Our interest is to have a plan in place if there is an emergency anywhere."

"Human life is our first priority with livestock second. We do not equate livestock to human life in our planning effort. I don't know anyone who would recommend we do." —SM

State plan

(Continued from Page A1)

Lytle went on to testify that trying to move a herd like his would take from six to eight hours, "just to get loaded up and out of there."

The state's emergency plan, however, does not call for evacuating animals, necessarily, but provides recommendations on how the animals can be protected from the effects of radiation through housing.

It suggests placing earth, hay, sacked feed or fertilizer, concrete blocks or other materials over and around exposed walls of barns and shelters to increase the radiation shielding effectiveness. It also rates the protection offered from various types of structures, from open sheds to bank barns.

When asked if he would say it was practical, under any cir-

cumstances, to build a wall of hay or bags of feed to close in a barn big enough to house his cattle, numbering over 200, Lytle responded negatively.

"It would take an army to move everything around," he said. "Plus the animals would be in it just as fast as they can." He then called the Commonwealth's suggestions on sheltering impractical.

Lytle explained his housing situation back at the farm is loose housing, a three-sided shed with an open front. The cattle have free-choice to go in or out.

There is no means of closing the front," Lytle said. "And we use that as natural ventilation."

In commenting on the livestock's need for air, water, feed, and milking, Lytle expressed concern. He testified that from missing a

(Turn to Page A28)