



# Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

## Get concerned about PRV

After a year and a half, the wheels of government are squeaking ahead on the road to helping Pennsylvania swine producers combat the contagious disease, pseudorabies, which has been slowly growing like a cancer in Lancaster County.

Why has it taken so long to act on this problem?

Government red tape is often blamed for most of the time lags. But, the real problem might be seated a little uncomfortably in the laps of the state's hog producers.

Disinterest in a disease that seems to be concentrated in one county — actually in one 50 square mile radius — may be stifling concern.

How quickly hog producers seem to forget the devastating effects of cholera that swept through the state not too many years ago. Although cholera has been brought under control in the U.S., this dread disease and another known as African swine fever lurk on our doorsteps.

Just across the border and a few miles over ocean waters, the Dominican Republic and Haiti have had to depopulate their swine herds because these contagious diseases were somehow brought into their country. And the same thing could possibly happen here, if government officials and hog producers aren't prepared.

Although most Pennsylvanians aren't troubled with small planes smuggling drugs into the U.S. landing in their corn fields, their fellow farmers in Florida and some of the other southern states find this happening with regularity. To avoid being apprehended, smugglers fly into the country and ditch their planes in some out-of-the-way spot (some farmer's field, at times) and desert the aircraft once the 'precious cargo' has been delivered.

Unfortunately, a lot of this drug traffic is coming from areas where hogs are carrying cholera and African swine fever.

What would happen if one of those small planes landed in a field used to pasture hogs, and the pilot happened to leave behind a pork sandwich, with the meat having been improperly cooked?

After the farmer finds the plane and notifies officials, all the garbage inside the craft is casually tossed out for the hogs. One of them dines on the leftover sandwich. Suddenly, the disease has sneaked past every defense regulation enacted and U.S. hog farmers are faced with an overwhelming epidemic.

Hopefully, this dramatic situation will never materialize

— but the possibility is there Are hog producers and animal health staff members ready for such an onslaught? Are producers willing to work together for regulations that would safeguard breeding swine as well as feeders?

If the pseudorabies case is any indicator of cooperation, it's going to be a long row to hoe.

The National Pork Producers Council recently went on record in opposition to the current PRV eradication program. Carson Rogers, chairman of their Swine Health Committee said, "Until we have a test or vaccine that allows discrimination between the vaccinated animal and the naturally infected animal, and information on how the disease spreads, we cannot support an extensive eradication effort."

However, NPPC admits pseudorabies poses an "economic hardship for many producers, with eight percent of all U.S. hogs infected and strict quarantines and regulations being used to restrict movement of infected hogs." Last year alone there were 1,217 confirmed cases in the U.S. with the highest incidence of PRV being found in the Cornbelt states of Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Missouri, Indiana, and Minnesota.

According to Rogers, producers feel nothing will be lost if there is a delay of a few years until the technology to effectively eradicate PRV is available. NPPC also requested USDA withdraw its federal pseudorabies regulations pertaining to the interstate movement of hogs.

Pork producers seem to be asking for problems instead of trying to solve them. Why? Economics, paperwork, time and labor? All of these seem



like lame excuses when considering a disease that wipes out profit in one fell swoop.

It seems most producers are looking for a vaccine to save the day. But, these PRV vaccines camouflage the disease — any hog that has been vaccinated reacts to the PRV test. It's impossible to differentiate between a diseased hog and a vaccinated one at this point.

But, there may be hope on the horizon. The Iowa State University is working on a subunit PRV vaccine.

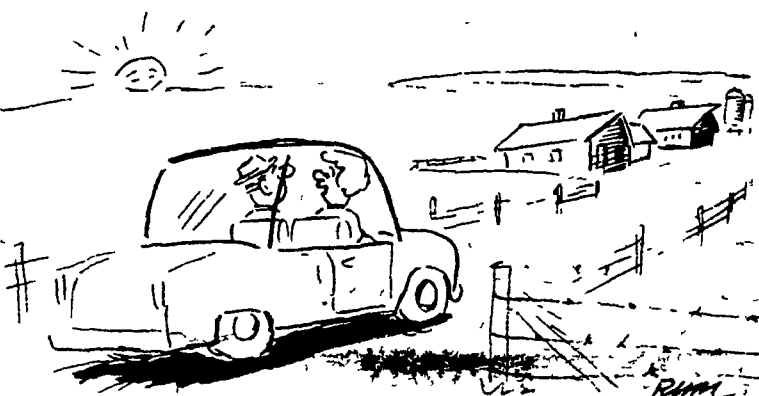
In a letter to Secretary John Block, Iowa Congressman Berkley Bedell "strongly urged" financial support of this research, stating, "If its use were made practical, the subunit vaccine would reduce the loss from the disease and slow the spread of the virus. Unlike available commercial vaccines, it would allow for differentiation between vaccinated pigs infected with pseudorabies and vaccinated pigs that have not been infected."

Bedell estimated it would cost \$400,000 over a four year period, in addition to the funds the university already has committed.

Bedell said he was "greatly concerned about the pseudorabies problem" and that it "makes more sense to spend a few well-placed dollars now to prevent substantial and more costly losses among hog producers later."

Let's hope hog producers soon start sharing this legislator's concerns.

## HAY HAWS



Thanks again, Clair, for our annual Dairy Month vacation. I enjoyed the whole afternoon.

**THE BIBLE SPEAKS**  
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

**THE PRESENCE**  
June 28, 1981

**Background Scripture**  
Deuteronomy 4:15-49.  
**Devotional Reading:**  
Hosea 6:1-6.

No matter how wise the teachings, no matter how beautiful the rituals, nor authoritative the scripture, no religion can long remain fresh and alive when its adherents lose the experience of the divine presence. Many of the problems which we face in our churches today can be traced, I believe, to our failure to maintain a first-hand religious experience. God cannot help but be remote and ineffective in our lives when our source of contact with him is second and even third-hand.

Religion cannot help but seem remote when most of our activity is relegated to talking about God as an article of faith or an abstract idea. People — and particularly the younger generation today — reject Christianity, not because our Christian teachings are unattractive, but because we have failed to convince others that we have ever been in communion or relationship with the God we profess.

**He Let You See and Hear**

In Deuteronomy 4 we are reminded that what made God so real to the Hebrew people was not the persuasiveness of the Hebrew

priests nor the brilliance of what they said about God. What made God so real to the Hebrew people was their experience of his presence in their lives. In the midst of their needs, they encountered God in a living experience. They saw what he did and they heard his voice: "on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire."

The key to the Hebrew religion was always the Hebrew experience of God. "And because he loved your fathers, and chose their descendents after them, and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power . . . know therefore this day, and lay it to your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other" (4:37). For the Hebrew, God was never just a great idea, but a profound experience of the divine presence. They believed in him and covenanted with him, not because it was logical, but because it grew out of their experience.

**His Own Presence**

Have you experienced the presence of God in your own life? If you have, you don't need any arguments about the existence of a Divine Being. But, if you haven't, why haven't you? Is it that God chooses not to reveal himself to you? Is it that the experience of God's presence is limited to a chosen few or a bygone time?

Or is it that you haven't recognized the presence in your life because you haven't allowed yourself to be aware of it? In *The Lark*, a play about Joan of Arc, the Dauphine of France is jealous because Joan's "voices" come to a simple maid and not himself. But Joan explains, "They do come to you, but you do not listen."

God is present, even if we are oblivious to him.

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent  
Phone 717-394-6851



**To Check Lighting For Layers**

One of the cardinal rules of poultry management is to never decrease the light period of flocks in production. Most flock managers would never intentionally decrease the day length to a flock in production but we are in the season of the year when this can happen accidentally.

Most layers are in light-controlled not light-tight housing. The major sources of light leakage are the exhaust fans and air intakes. Pullet flocks placed in the laying house during the late fall, winter or spring can be given a 14 hour day. As summer approaches and natural day length exceeds 14 hours, layers in non-light tight housing will be exposed to an increasing day length due to the light entering the building through the fans and air intakes. This increase in day length causes no problem. The longest day occurs on June 21 and decreases until December 21. It is this decrease in day length that can cause layers to go out of production unless the time clocks controlling the lights are readjusted to provide the layers with the day length they received on June 21.

The two points to remember are: 1) never subject layers to a decrease in day length and 2) unless time clocks are readjusted on June 21, the layers in non-light tight houses could be exposed to an unintentional decrease in day length.

**Be Alert For Armyworm Activity**

We have seen armyworm activity in wheat and corn fields and

have received several reports of activity from farmers in the New Holland-Leola areas. They have started to snip off heads of grain and consume corn plants. As of the 19th, the worms were quite immature and infestation appeared to be spotty. Thus, recommendations for widespread spraying did not appear to be necessary. However, we urge farmers to check their fields, closely, to report any activity observed and ask for control recommendations by contacting the Extension Office.

**To Control Flies**

The good growing conditions that we've experienced this spring for field crops also favor the build-up of fly populations. The good moisture presents ideal conditions for maggots to develop into flies. We suggest that livestock and poultry operators use residual insecticides on their buildings and pit walls to cut down on the fly problem. Materials such as Rabon, Vapona, Korlan, Ectiban, and Atroban are showing results. One of the real keys for control, is to use different materials at different intervals to break the cycles.

One of the most important practices in keeping down the number of flies is to clean up the place and eliminate fly breeding areas. Manure packs and other debris are good fly breeding places.

Good sanitation along with insecticides can keep flies under control. Always follow label instructions for rates of application.

(Turn to Page A12)