

PRV's big question: 'Should I depopulate?'

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN EAST EARL—"Depopulation." It's a word that may come up a time or two at next week's public meetings of the Pseudorabies Task Force.

The sessions, which Lancaster County pork producers are encouraged to attend, include:

Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the Bergstrasse School, east of Ephrata.

Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in the basement meeting room of the Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

And when you talk about "depopulation," it's best to talk to someone who has personally experienced it.

One such person is Bill Fisher, president of the Lancaster County Pork Producers and manager of a large breeding operation. He's also a member of the Task Force.

"We were one of the first operations affected by the outbreak," Fisher explained.

"We decided to depopulate last year and did it between about April and July."

Fisher further explained that the decision whether to depopulate is largely a matter of weighing one set of facts against another.

"We have a Charolais beef herd," he said.

"There was no trace of it in the

cattle, but we just didn't want to take the chance of it getting into the cattle.

"If it gets into beef or dairy cattle, it gets so much more serious."

The operation marketed about 150 head of breeding stock in the depopulation process.

"We were out of the feeder pig business for about three months," Fisher explained.

"But we were lucky since we had gilts and boars at another location and this cut about three months or so off the time we would have had to be out of business."

(It takes about six or seven months to completely depopulate and resume feeder pig operations for a breeding operation, if a head start can't be gained by having gilts at another location.)

"Anyone considering depopulation can also gain this head start by setting up a PRV-free operation possibly with a neighbor or even on the same farm, if it's at least a half-mile away," Fisher said.

"But you must be very careful not to carry the disease from one to the other, either on your own clothing, by a dog or whatever."

Fisher had the hog buildings completely cleaned and disinfected. They then stood idle for a month. Work started in the farrowing house and then through the nurseries.

Fisher went on to explain that

another problem he encountered since the operation was an early victim of the disease was marketing the feeder pigs already in the pipeline.

"We worked real hard until a quarantined feedlot system was established so that we could sell off the feeders."

But not all of the offspring were losses

"From the last batch of farrowings, we got negative-tested offsprings," he said.

"While the sows tested positive and were eventually marketed, we did get some negative offspring."

The weather also cooperated with the depopulation.

"It was only hot for a couple of weeks during the depopulation" Fisher said.

"The PRV was bad then, but seemed to go dormant when it cooled off."

"When it (pseudorabies) hits, it hits hard."

"And it came after two years of poor market prices."

"You know, you can only absorb so much in this business."

"It's a tough decision to make. But you gotta make it."

Soybean farmers urge Soviets to purchase beans

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — U.S. soybean producers have told Soviet leaders they look forward to resumption of Soviet purchase of U.S. soybeans and soybean products.

"The U.S. currently has plentiful supplies of soybeans and products on hand and U.S. farmers are expected to harvest a near record crop this fall," said American Soybean Association President, Charles Hamon, in a letter to Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, Boris Gordeev.

"Favorable weather in the soybean growing areas indicate that this year's crop will be reasonably priced and of the highest quality," said Hamon.

"The American Soybean Association and the American

soybean processing industry are eager to provide soybeans and soybean products to meet your country's needs."

Citing the economic importance of renewed trade relations with the USSR, Hamon noted that in 1979 the Soviet Union purchased 66 million bushels of U.S. soybeans, 27,213 metric tons of soybean meal and 24,692 metric tons of U.S. soybean oil.

"The total value of Soviet purchases of soybeans and products

during 1979 was nearly \$512 million," said Hamon.

In his letter Hamon also expressed interest in renewing working relations between ASA and Soviet feed manufacturing and animal nutrition specialists.

"We are prepared to resume export servicing activities such as technical assistance programs to increase efficiency of using soybean products at the earliest possible date after resumption of purchases of U.S. soybeans and soybean products," said Hamon.

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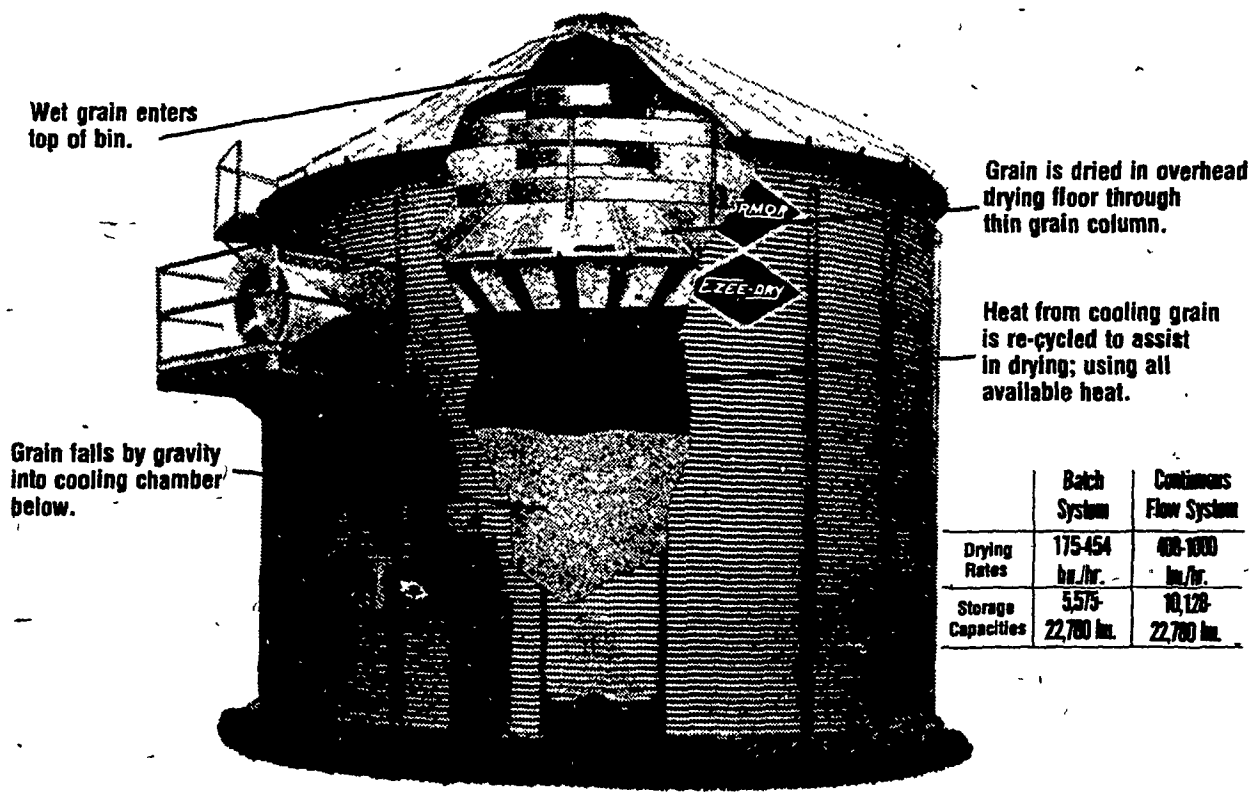


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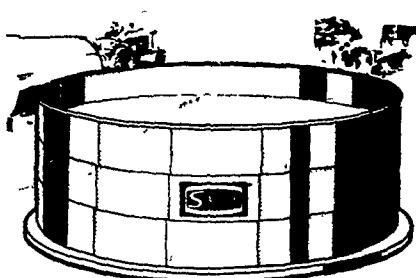
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