

## Diagnostic lab helps head off disease problems

UNIVERSITY PARK — Practicing veterinarians in many instances rely on laboratory tests to determine the reasons why livestock and poultry become ill or die. Prompt diagnosis usually means heading off potential problems that undoubtedly could cause severe economic losses.

The Livestock and Poultry Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, located on Penn State's main campus at University Park, is one of three state facilities designed to assist in the diagnosis of health problems in the Commonwealth's livestock and poultry industries.

The laboratory staff of four veterinarians and several technicians each year run tests on several thousand specimens and perform autopsies on more than 1,000 animals and chickens with health problems. Findings are promptly reported to the veterinarian or farmer who requested this service, often by telephone.

Analyses focus on four main areas: Stool samples are tested for the presence and identification of internal parasites; blood and serum samples are checked for various abnormalities and antibodies; autopsies are performed to determine illness or cause of death; and tissue and tumor studies are carried out for evidence of cancer or viral-bacterial diseases.

"Veterinarians at the lab have particular specialties which allows us to run a myriad of tests on the specimens or animals submitted," said Dr. Terrance

Wilson, associate professor of veterinary science at Penn State, who serves as scientific coordinator at the laboratory. "A nominal fee is charged to cover the cost of the test."

He added that although referrals should be handled by veterinarians, any person may submit specimens or animals to the laboratory for analysis. Common animal species submitted to the lab are dairy, poultry, swine, and sheep.

The Penn State veterinarian pointed out that in order to properly diagnose a case, a clinical history must be provided. This includes major signs of illness, type of management program, previous treatment, and severity of illness of death of other animals on the same farm.

One of the advantages of large-scale animal disease diagnosis is determining where problems are occurring and then relating this information to regulatory officials. If new diseases crop up in certain areas of the Commonwealth, control and/or eradication measures can promptly be put into effect by state officials.

"The Penn State facility is run in close cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) under the direction of Dr. Max Van Buskirk," Dr. Wilson emphasized. "Our work complements the testing conducted at BAI laboratories at Summerdale and Tunkhannock.

One member of the Penn State



Dr. Terrance Wilson, scientific coordinator of Penn State's Livestock and Poultry Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, performs autopsy on a dairy calf that was experiencing severe respiratory problems.

laboratory veterinary faculty serves as a full-time field investigator, working closely with state and federal officials on specific disease problems.

Laboratory faculty are also

starting a continuing education program on activities at the laboratory and animal disease diagnostic work. Audiences include farm groups, feed salespersons, and others employed

in agriculture.

Veterinarians and farmers wishing additional information on submitting specimens or animals may call the laboratory at 814-863-0837.

### Lebanon Co. Livestock Club meets

LEBANON — The Lebanon County 4-H Livestock Club met on Wednesday, May 18 at the Lebanon Area Fair grounds, to view demonstrations by club members.

Nicole Emrich, club president, announced that Olympic Day will be held at the Lebanon Area Fair grounds on Wednesday, June 15,

and that 4-H steers needing a freeze brand should bring them to the Robert Miller farm on Saturday, May 21.

On June 18, the livestock judging team will meet at the Charles Bomgardner farm for a judging workshop.

### Spurs 'n Burrs hold grooming clinic

PLEASANT VALLEY — The Spurs and Burrs 4-H Club met on May 15 at the home of Nancy Hottle for a grooming and showmanship clinic.

Following the demonstrations, members voted to seek sponsors for the county horse show.

The members are selling cookies as a fund raiser, until June 4.

### Glen Rock 4-H meets

GLEN ROCK — The Glen Rock 4-H Club met on May 13 to participate in a meat selection program by Tony Dobrosky,

county ag agent, at Richard L. Beck and Sons Meat Market.

The next meeting will feature a petting zoo at Pleasant Home, June 11.

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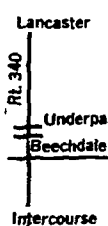
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