

Brucellosis progress reported

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Department of Agriculture animal health officials are encouraged by developments in the nationwide program to control and wipe out cattle brucellosis. The current total of 6,434 quarantined herds, reported at the end of December, is the lowest ever recorded, and down by more than 800 from a year earlier.

Last year's 0.37 percent infection rate in market cattle tested was down from 0.41 percent in 1982. The market cattle infection rate for the three-month period ending Jan. 1 was 0.28 percent, although usually a period of low incidence, down by a full tenth of one percent from the same period a year earlier. "Hard work is

beginning to pay off," said Bert Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "But I urge state-federal animal health officials and their livestock industry cooperators not to relax. "Brucellosis is an insidious disease. It has taken us 10 to 12 years to recover from a resurgence of infection that occurred in the early 1970's. We don't want to be in that position again," Hawkins said.

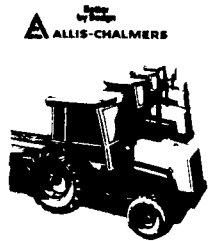
Fifteen states and the U.S. Virgin Islands are classified brucellosis free, meaning no known infected herds for a year or longer. Five states have been added since a new, tougher rating system began in May 1982.

The free states are: Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah and Vermont.

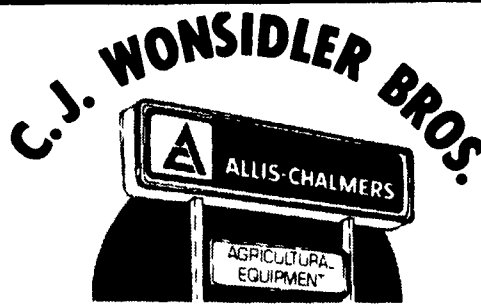
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PRV victim speaks out

(Continued from Page A12)

what hogs entering are infected or exposed to the pseudorabies virus. So many of our trucks go right back to the farm within the same day and transport another group of hogs without cleaning or disinfecting.

We, as the industry of this Commonwealth, need to look at this situation. Policies might need to be formulated for all custom haulers to clean and disinfect between shipments of animals to the market place. This would stop that possible transmission of pseudorabies.

Third, we, as the industry of this Commonwealth, need to know more about Pseudorabies and the present pilot program as instituted in Pennsylvania. The pamphlet, referred to earlier from the Livestock Conservation Institute, is an excellent source of material that could be distributed in our market receipts from our auction markets and slaughtering houses or from our extension offices and Pork Council mailings. With that could be the current pilot program of eradication in Pennsylvania. When an eradication program is in effect, the industry needs to know about it and in a simple and direct form. Sending it in market receipts is one of the most direct forms.

Fourth, we come to the most difficult area in our present eradication program - no indemnity for depopulation. This I feel is unfair especially in farrow-to-finish operations and breeder-producing operations. I said this last July when this policy went into effect, but just as the rest of the

industry, I did nothing about it to express my views to our lawmakers. I apologize for abandoning the few farms that were forced to depopulate at their own expense within the eight months as required in the eradication program. In checking with bankers about farrow-to-finish operations that have depopulated previously, costs have run from \$500 to \$1000 a sow unit. Also, I think this is the only state in the United States that currently has this policy.

The reason presently expressed in the current policy, depopulation without indemnity forced on quarantined farmers within 8 months, is so that the neighboring farmer will not also suffer the same serious economic losses that could come from the quarantined herd. That to me is putting the cart before the horse, or more importantly pseudorabies before people. I recently read about a retired agricultural journalist and what he considered the most important policy he used writing articles: of all the things found on the farm, the most important are the people. Is not the farmer having pseudorabies as important as the neighboring farmer who does not? Let's keep the horse pulling the cart.

In retrospect, avian influenza has gone this direction and hog cholera has in the past. At the recent Keystone Pork Congress, an extension agent made this comment, "Considering the size and density of our animal agriculture during the last decade on our farms and the disease problems

that it has created, governmental policies for eradication and depopulation might have to be redefined and follow a more consistent policy." That is all I am suggesting in this policy of eradication by depopulation, some consistency in policy.

I have suggested to our legislatures during the past few weeks a possible idea to provide indemnity for farrowing operations so that farmers depopulating would receive breeding value of sows and boars instead of salvage value as received at the market. In most cases this probably would be over one quarter of the losses received in the down-time of the depopulation program. This could be a start on the plan. I was encouraged when I heard a local legislator is considering a funding program in support of indemnity.

In the above thoughts, I have tried to analyze this program of pseudorabies eradication in Pennsylvania, explain its weaknesses and suggest some changes and additions. From the stand-point of being a victim of its path, I am speaking out. Those of you who are reading this letter, from politicians to producers to consumers, I am challenging you to study the present policies, consider my suggestions as food for thought and create some changes in the pseudorabies eradication program.

I would like to see pseudorabies eradicated, but we need the tools to do it effectively without ruining producers in the process.

Thank you for considering my thoughts.

Mark F. Nestleroth
RD 5, Manheim