

Farm Talk

by
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What a premise for a movie. World War III, the atomic war that nobody wants and it starts over a grain embargo.

I just happened to tune in a T.V. movie recently that dealt with just such a scenario. We embargoed our grain and so in a strategic move to free it up and thus feed its people the Russians parachuted a combat group into Alaska where they planned to blow a big hole in the Alaskan pipeline, cutting off a third of our domestic oil supply. From there it went into all sorts of high level conferences and telephone calls, various and assorted saber rattling and ultimately buttm pushing on both sides.

It started over food. Maybe that seems farfetched. But it could happen. Perhaps not with the Russians but with some other starving nation that needs our agricultural abundance.

In the movie the Russian premiere portrayed by Brian Keith told our president, Rock Hudson, that we had no right to deny grain to hungry Russian people. That food belongs to the people of the world and that no nation for whatever reason has the right to deny it. That's probably a fairly common concept in some circles. Certainly there are people in this country who feel our abundant food supply should be shared with some of the starving third world people.

I've always had trouble with that concept because I could never figure out who would pay the farmers for producing the food. In most of these conversations it's just assumed that the food usually meaning grain crops is just

available like some wonderful natural resource that's piled up somewhere waiting to be used. Lost in the rhetoric is the fact that nothing is produced of an agricultural nature until farmers produce it, and the reason they produce it is the expectation of profit. It's all part of our free enterprise system. Farmers go to the fields each spring in search of income. Money that will pay the bills, send their kids to college, finance a retirement and take care of the day-to-day comforts of life.

To a starving population somewhere in some almost unheard of country that concept must seem grotesque. How can Americans let other people starve when they have so much? But another more important question, how can American farmers be expected to feed a hungry world? A world in which it is said half the people go to bed hungry every night. It's an obvious impossibility and even if a system could be found where all-out food production in this country could be made available to the world, how would it be distributed?

Starving people don't necessarily live in port cities where large freighters dock and unload much needed food supplies. No, for the most part starving people are in the boondocks hundreds of miles from the nearest seaport, many miles from the nearest hard road where there is no way of transporting food short of carrying it in on their backs. And then you must deal with the politics, the corruption and the disruption of a government system influenced by such outside

pressures as free food. It's mind boggling to try to develop a plan for getting America's over abundant food supply to the hungry people who really need it.

Consider another factor. Our agricultural abundance tends to be in corn, wheat, cotton and a few lesser crops while for the most part the hungry nations are looking for rice, a crop that grows in only limited areas of this country.

Would somebody really start a war over food? It sounds impossible especially in a nation that has plenty of food. But what about a nation that is literally starving to death. If it had the military power, it just might. It's generally agreed that food should not be a political weapon but it is. It's part of a system that is so complex that it can't be separated when it comes time to discuss the non-food issues. We've seen grain embargoes come and go and we're still seeing their devastating effect on American agriculture. American farmers are continually yanked around by political whims and diplomatic adventures that first have farmers

racing full tilt to feed the world and then mired down in a mountain of grain created by an embargo.

Yes, food has been a political

weapon in this country and in many other countries and it probably will be again. Let's just hope it's never the basis for the start of a war.

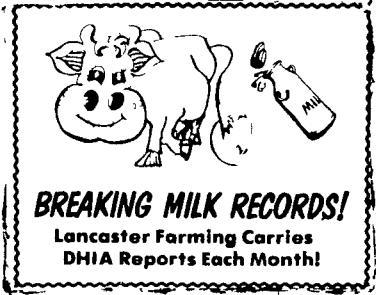
Scours vaccine available

KENILWORTH, N.J. — A new vaccine is available to combat the costly problem of calf scours. Piliguard Coli-Bovine, from Schering Corporation, has been shown to offer significant protection against E. coli-caused scours.

The vaccine is administered to the dam, who passes protective antibodies to the calf through her colostrum. Piliguard Coli-Bovine works by preventing hair-like structures (pili) on bacteria from attaching to the surface of the calf's intestine. Without the ability to attach, the bacteria are less likely to cause scours.

In a laboratory challenge trial, calves from vaccinated and non-vaccinated cows were orally dosed with E. coli and then monitored for

signs and effects of scours. Calves from non-vaccinated cows had a mortality rate of 55%, compared to only 4.8% for calves from vaccinated dams. Severity and duration of scours and degree of dehydration were greatly reduced in calves from vaccinates versus non-vaccinates.



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