

USDA says PRV spread is slowing

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A recently completed nationwide survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture measuring the in-

cidence of pseudorabies in swine shows an 8.78-percent infection rate, compared with 8.39 percent found three years earlier.

"On the average, nationwide spread of pseudorabies is obviously leveling off," said Bert W. Hawkins, administrator of USDA's

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "This is a positive development, since the infection rate increased from 0.56 percent to 8.39 percent in the 1970's, causing a real worry in the swine industry."

The survey is based on a sample of swine slaughtered at federally inspected plants from March 1983 through February 1984. It follows similar USDA surveys done about every three years since 1974, Hawkins said.

The sampling procedure used in the survey was designed to give each pig brought to federally inspected slaughter plants an equal chance to be selected for testing. The slaughter plants submitted 12,572 samples for testing at the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratories, Ames, Iowa.

Survey results are affected by seasonal differences in the sampling periods, the influence of vaccination and other factors. Vaccines for pseudorabies became available in June 1977, and tests can not differentiate between infected and vaccinated animals.

"Still," Hawkins said, "the trend is clear. The increase in pseudorabies noticed during the 1970's has been leveled."

"We think the reduced spread of pseudorabies has come about because of a greater awareness on the part of producers that this disease is a problem to be reckoned with," Hawkins said. "Producers now are more likely to isolate and retest swine brought to their farms. Mandatory state and federal tests of swine shipped

interstate also have helped identify animals carrying the infection."

Because of increased concern about pseudorabies as a livestock disease problem, five states are conducting pilot projects to see whether current methods can be used effectively to eradicate pseudorabies. Pilot projects, conducted with assistance from USDA and the National Pork Producers Council, are underway in Illinois, Iowa, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Pseudorabies, also known as Aujeszky's disease or "mat itch," is a virus disease of swine that is highly fatal to newborn pigs. Swine infected at an older age do not usually die, but tend to become carriers and may shed the virus when they become stressed. The disease can be transmitted to most other warmblooded animals, but not to humans.

Seedling distribution

LEBANON — On April 13 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. several members from the Cedar Crest FFA helped the Lebanon Conservation District distribute evergreen and hardwood seedlings at Coleman's Park. They were under the leadership of Gene Odat, District Forester and Karl Brown of the Lebanon Soil Conservation District. Approximately 5,000 trees were distributed during the day.

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