

Field Day cancelled

GEORGETOWN, Del. — The continued threat of avian influenza (AI) in Pennsylvania and Virginia has prompted the cancellation of this year's University of Delaware Farm and Home Field Day at the

Georgetown substation, according to Ed Ralph, substation director and general chairman of the annual event, which normally takes place in August.

"This will be the first time in 40 years that

field day has not been held," Ralph said, "but Delmarva's \$860 million broiler industry is just too much to risk."

Great progress has been made in the AI eradication efforts in Pennsylvania and

Virginia, but the threat still exists. Also, several Pennsylvania poultry flocks which were infected with the so-called mild form of the disease several months ago have not yet been depopulated.

Ralph explained that "It is the feeling of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Delmarva Emergency Poultry Disease Task Force that as long as there are any active cases of AI — and for a few months after the last known case is depopulated — all precautions must be continued on Delmarva. If the university held

field day this year, it would appear to some that we are saying the threat of AI is past, and it certainly is NOT."

Donald F. Crossan, dean of the university's College of Agricultural Sciences and director of its Agricultural Experiment Station, added that "Since June 8, 1983, when we first received official word about the presence of AI in

Pennsylvania, our research, extension and poultry diagnostic staffs have been working with Delmarva poultry industry personnel, state and federal authorities on a daily basis in an effort to prevent the spread of AI to Delmarva. To hold the field day this year would be inconsistent with the extensive disease prevention programs which have been in effect on the peninsula for the past several months."

Serious attempts have been made to eliminate all tours of poultry farms and facilities on Delmarva, as well as activities such as Farm and Home Field Day which would attract people from other states in the mid-Atlantic area — including those under AI quarantine.

According to Crossan, Farm and Home Field Day at Georgetown is the largest agricultural gathering sponsored by the University of Delaware. "Holding it is very important to our research and extension efforts," he concluded, "but not at the risk — no matter how slight — of providing a means of spreading AI to Delmarva. Though we have cancelled field day for this year, we look forward to resuming the event in 1985."

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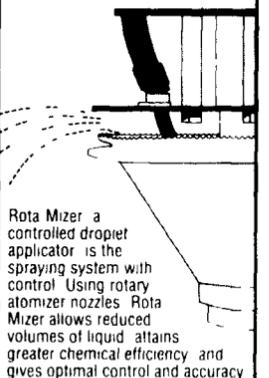
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