

Beacon, Martin's hold swine meeting

BY JACK HUBLEY

MAUGANSVILLE, Md. — Local swine producers gathered in Maugansville on Tuesday for a liver and lung show sponsored by the Beacon Milling Company and Martin's Elevator.

Held in conjunction with Pfizer Inc., the liver and lung demonstration showcased the firm's Banminth/Mecadox feed supplements and featured presentations by veterinarians and specialists on all phases of swine production.

The liver and lung demonstration was the culmination of a 28-day trial in which three groups, containing three pigs each, were fed rations containing different combinations of wormers and antibiotic supplements.

The test was supervised by Dr. Jerome Harness of Franklin Veterinary Associates, using pigs and facilities provided by producers Clair Miller and Dan Clark of Williamsport, Maryland.

Following the posting of a pig from each group, Dr. Homer Connell, Pfizer research veterinarian, examined the liver and lungs of the animals and discussed how worm migration damages the organs.

Dr. Connell explained that antibacterial agents such as his firm's Mecadox have been shown to be excellent growth promoters in the absence of disease. This is accomplished by increasing the absorption of proteins, amino acids and nitrogen, thus improving feed efficiency, Connell noted.

Though Mecadox is a recognized control for salmonella and dysentery, Connell pointed out that the drug will not cure or prevent atrophic rhinitis. Since Mecadox does permit pigs to grow even in the presence of rhinitis, however, Dr. Connell advocates occasional slaughter checks to locate the disease in its early stages.

On the subject of dysentery, Connell underlined the importance of controlling potential carrier

animals around the hog operation. The veterinarian pointed out that dogs may carry the dysentery organism for up to 13 days, and the disease has been known to survive in mice for more than 200 days. Pigs, themselves, may carry dysentery for up to 70 days without outward manifestation, he added.

After listing six types of worms capable of causing trouble in a swine operation, Connell stated that roundworms are the biggest offenders, accounting for 72 percent of the worm damage in hog operations.

Connell reviewed the life cycle of the round worm, stating that after a pig swallows the eggs, the larva hatch and penetrate the gut wall where they enter the bloodstream and travel to the liver. The feeding larva cause tearing and bleeding in the liver, resulting in an influx of white blood cells and the formation of scar tissue.

After a few days, the larva molt, travel to the heart and then to the lungs where the most severe damage results. Once incorporated into lung tissue, the worms cause lesions which admit bacteria.

Stressing the tenacity of the roundworms, Dr. Connell stated that a single female may lay up to one million eggs a day, which can survive for years away from a host organism. Though swine kept on a dirt lot will experience the most severe infestations, Connell cautioned that roundworm eggs are found on slats, as well, and even the most thorough washing will not eliminate them entirely.

Speaking on the subject of swine herd health management, Dr. Jerome Harness stressed the importance of preventive medicine in increasing quality, efficiency and profit.

Stating that pigs are prone to a greater variety of diseases than most farm animals, Dr. Harness said that the farmer's goal should be to reduce disease, thereby reducing drug usage necessary for treatment.



Dr. Homer Connell, (right) Pfizer research veterinarian, explains how worm migration in swine damages the liver and lungs, and retards growth rate. Held in Maugansville, Maryland on Tuesday, the demonstration was part of a swine meeting staged by Beacon Milling Company, and Martin's Elevator, in conjunction with Pfizer.

Two important management techniques in a disease surveillance program are slaughter checks performed at least twice a year, and blood testing, Harness said.

On the subject of herd additions, the veterinarian urged farmers to know what they are buying and to quarantine new animals for 30 days. He urged farmers to maintain a closed herd, if possible, and added that artificial insemination techniques may facilitate this goal by providing the necessary outside genetics without the introduction of the animals themselves.

Dr. Harness encouraged farmers to schedule regular visits by qualified veterinarians or swine specialists in an effort to discover and checkmate potential problems.

Scott Hodgson, Beacon swine

specialist, spoke at length on improving weaning weights and identifying finishing inefficiencies.

Hodgson stressed the importance of record-keeping, stating that the producer needs to know his weaning weights and how they compare to the average. The following average weaning weights were provided: 21-day weight, 12 pounds; 28-day weight, 16.50 pounds; 35-day weight, 21 pounds.

In order to improve weaning weights, the specialist instructed farmers to pay attention to how their sows are milking.

"The more frequently you feed that sow early in lactation, the better off you're going to be," Hodgson asserted, adding that during the first week, sows should be fed four to six times daily. He said the daily amount should total at least two pounds for the sow herself, plus one pound for each

baby pig.

Points stressed concerning finishing included cleanliness of feeders, adequate water intake, proper ventilation and close attention to pen densities. Hodgson recommended the use of snout coolers and advised farmers to reduce the number of pigs per pen during the summer months.

The specialist encouraged farmers to sell their hogs at the proper weight, and to find a market for pigs that are substandard.

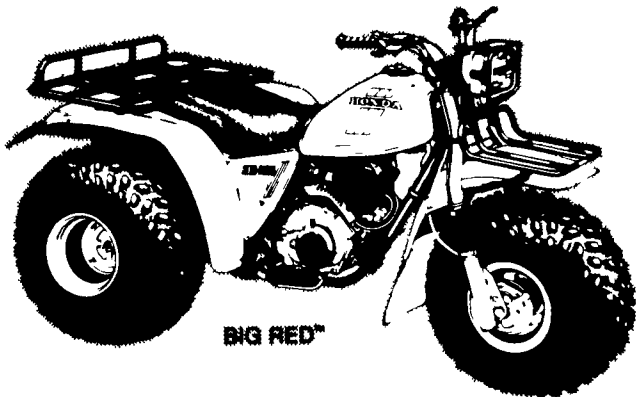
"About two percent of those hogs aren't going to do well, and the key is to identify them and sell them right away," Hodgson advised.

Hodgson concurred with the speakers preceding him on the importance of a comprehensive record-keeping system.

"The producer needs to know exactly what it costs him to produce a pound of pork," Hodgson said.

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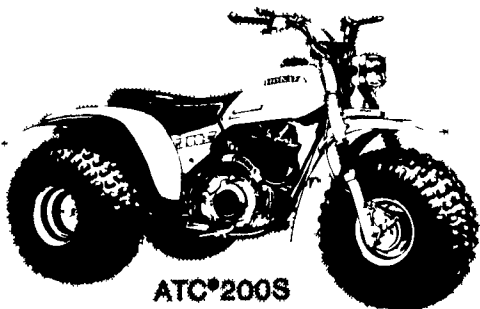
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