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Meeting to ask:

Is PRV fat in fire?

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
HARRISBURG — The proverbial fat may really be in the fire during October Pork Month. Pseudorabies and more specifically forced depopulation without indemnification to control it apparently have heated the boiling point between the state and some swine producers.

It's reported that a meeting will be called early next month by the Department of Agriculture among farm leaders and groups to review the pseudorabies situation and the forced depopulation policy of the Bureau of Animal Industry.

This session has been called apparently as a followup to a rather strongly worded letter that went out under the Pa. Pork Producers Council to the state calling for the forced depopulation policy to be rescinded.

The letter reportedly asked for a reply within two weeks and implied that more stringent measures might otherwise be taken.

The forced depopulation policy discussion centers around two primary viewpoints:

—When a positive PRV herd is found, it amounts to a tremendous economic impact on the producer, particularly if it's a breeding operation. While stock can be marketed, all breeding value — in both dollars and time involved in genetic development — is lost, as

well as additional costs of downtime and cleanup.

—Against this is weighed the possible impact of the disease on the state's 18,000 swine producers, allied industry and possible effects on other livestock and dairy operations.

The slaughter house surveillance program and blood testing by the state is uncovering more incidence of the disease in the state.

Ten of the 14 breeding operations currently under quarantine have been found through the surveillance program.

The disease is found in the blood samples as sows and boars are periodically moved out of the breeding operations to market.

Including associated finishing operations, 31 quarantines are in effect by the Bureau of Animal Industry. One breeding operation discovery can result in several associated finishing operations being included in the quarantine.

Latest reports of the PRV herds have included both family breeding farms, in which a tightly closed operation is followed, and more commercial feeder pig operations that result in both the quarantine of the central sow facilities and the finishing operations.

The concentration of pseudorabies still remains in the northern and western sections of Lancaster County.

In Clearfield County:

Extension to promote ag & tourism development

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
CLEARFIELD — For the first time in its history, Penn State Extension is becoming directly involved in economic development, including not only traditional agricultural areas, but also tourism.

Clearfield County Extension is now seeking a fulltime staff member, who will be concerned entirely with Ag and Tourism Development and Promotion.

"We're in a kind of depressed area here," explains Harold Bock, Clearfield County agent, "and we need someone to coordinate small agricultural and tourism development projects that will permit our residents to supplement their income."

Possible areas of investigation:

Ag projects, such as rabbit production, growing Christmas trees, vegetable marketing and sheep production.

Tourism projects in rural areas, such as "Bed and Breakfast," longer-term farm tourists and recreational development.

"We're located conveniently between New York City and Pittsburgh," Bock said, "presenting a number of recreational possibilities.

Concerning ag development, we now have only a few small vegetable tailgate markets and our

reclaimed strip mine areas could be utilized for sheep production."

The groundwork for the Ag and Tourism Development post was laid last fall when a Clearfield County group started preliminary discussions on ways to boost the area's economy. The group included Extension, the County Farmers' Association, county commissioners and agri-business.

"We came up with a number of ideas, but saw the need for someone to coordinate the program," Bock said.

The county commissioners, who help fund the Extension program, suggested the concept be expanded also into the area of tourism.

Application was made for

matching funds through the state's Ben Franklin program and a grant will permit getting the concept and its new and unique Extension position started for next year.

Bock also explained that a livestock auction will be held in Clearfield County this fall for the first time to stimulate 4-H livestock project participation. Clearfield has no regular livestock auction outlet.

In addition to the new Ag and Tourism Development and Promotion position, the Clearfield Extension also has a 4-H and horticulture opening due to the promotion of Jim Welshans to the Extension director post in Dauphin County.



Lowell Brubaker stands with the grand champion Holstein of the Manheim Farm Show, Hertzler Astro New Beginning. Brubaker and his wife Deb exhibited the grand champion and a number of first place winners on Thursday at the Farm Show.

'New Beginning' for Brubakers

BY WENDY WEHR
MANHEIM—You might call Lowell and Deb Brubaker's year at the Manheim Farm Show a new beginning — this is the first year they've ever shown the grand champion Holstein. And they can thank "New Beginning" for that

honor.

The five-year-old Hertzler Astro New Beginning took grand champion honors at the Manheim Farm Show dairy show on Thursday, and Lowell and Deb Brubaker were pleased with the win.

"She just calved a month ago, so she's looking real good," said Deb. The judge of the show remarked that New Beginning had the most dairyness and the best rear udder in the show. He also awarded the five-year-old the top place in the best udder class.

But there's greater significance to New Beginning's name. "She was a wedding present from my parents," explained Lowell, "So Deb and I named her 'New Beginning' to mark the beginning of our new life together."

New Beginning is also a healthy producer for the couple, with a top record of 22,000 pounds. The Brubakers farm in partnership with Lowell's father, Harold. They have about 125 milking head.

Along with showing the grand

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Are BMP's the best way to tackle Bay problem?

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
NEW HOLLAND — Are BMP's (Better Management Practices) — the heart of Pennsylvania's approach — the best way to clean up waters in the Commonwealth and reduce ag nutrient loading of the Chesapeake Bay?

Not in all cases, cautions a member of the USDA's Economic Research Service. One of a number of speakers at a Thursday meeting in New Holland on cleanup efforts in the Conestoga headwaters area of Northeastern Lancaster County, Ed Young, of the USDA's Economic Research Service, stationed at State College, pointed specifically to Better Management Practices that control erosion, such as terraces, as likely being counter-productive in reducing nutrient loading of the Bay.

"Nitrogen loading is the most significant problem," Young said.

"You can't only address erosion control or you could help to actually increase nutrient loading."

As Young explained, nitrogen put into the soil either through manure or commercial fertilizer can go only four places.

—It can go into the crops.

—A small part can be volatilized and vaporized into the air.

—It can go into surface water.

—Or it can go into underground water.

Erosion control measures, as terraces, only hold the water and send it down into the ground along with the nitrogen faster and in greater concentrations.

Through the ground, the nitrogen can travel, into fractured rock formations to area streams and on its way to the Chesapeake Bay.

Another speaker at the session attended by more than 100 ag and political officials affirmed that nitrogen can travel very quickly after a heavy rain down through the ground and into underground water supplies.

James Gerhardt, of the U.S. Geological Service, which has been

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