

USDA issues PRV pilot project report

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Preliminary reports of a five-state pseudorabies eradication project indicate that pseudorabies can be eradicated from swine herds, although it is not certain they will remain disease-free if there are infected herds nearby, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

The five participating states are Illinois, Iowa, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Pseudorabies, also known as Aujeszky's disease or "mad itch," is a virus disease of swine that is almost always fatal to newborn pigs. Swine can transmit the disease to most other warm-blooded animals, but not to humans.

"Between April 1983 and March 1984 the states—with support from the pork industry—joined USDA to evaluate practical techniques for eliminating pseudorabies," said Bert W. Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"With the pilot projects scheduled for completing next September, we are about midway in our evaluations," he said.

According to Hawkins, participating states and industry representatives have been inventive to developing methods to clean up individual herds. "What remains to be seen is whether a specific geographical area can be freed of the disease and remain free if there is disease in adjacent areas."

Hawkins said three methods are currently used to eliminate infection: segregating offspring that are uninfected while gradually eliminating the rest of the herd, testing individual animals and removing those that react to the diagnostic test, and slaughtering the entire herd and restocking with clean animals.

"Another possible tool, vaccination, is being evaluated in 71 Iowa herds—both those that are known to be infected and those that are pseudorabies-free," he said.

Hawkins said a major challenge in the fight against pseudorabies is developing effective methods for identifying swine so that individual animals can be traced back to their

herd of origin. "New vinyl backtags have shown some promise for maintaining a pig's identity through slaughter.

"Another initiative appears less successful, however. A pseudorabies skin test evaluated in Illinois did not accurately detect the disease."

The five states are determining the costs of various eradication techniques and comparing them with losses incurred by producers who take no action. Formal economic studies are underway in Iowa and Illinois, about the begin in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, and under consideration in North Carolina, Hawkins said.

Individual states report the following activities:

ILLINOIS AND IOWA: animal health specialists and traveling to farms in selected counties to determine the disease status of swine herds and to eliminate problems where they exist. Participation by owners is voluntary.

ILLINOIS: All but two of the 145 herd owners in the participating townships agreed to take part in the pilot project. Thirty herds were found to be infected. One Illinois herd that was free of disease on an initial test became infected with pseudorabies, apparently because the producer hauled swine feed in a truck used earlier for hauling dead pigs. So far, 11 herds have been released from quarantine after becoming pseudorabies-free.

To support the eradication program, Illinois state officials and the swine industry made funds available to indemnify owners who used the slaughter-and-restock method to remove infection. Effective Feb. 15, a new state law will require anyone selling feeder swine in Illinois to test a portion of the breeder herd for pseudorabies.

IOWA: Iowa officials report participation by all but one of the 212 herds within the project boundaries in Marshall County. Testing for pseudorabies has been completed in all but six of the herds, and 31 were found to be infected. Six herds are now free of the disease; three herds became reinfected when infected feeder pigs were brought in. State officials expect most, if not all, the herds to be disease-free in 1986.

NORTH CAROLINA, PENNSYLVANIA and WISCONSIN: pseudorabies infection is being located by drawing blood samples at slaughter plants and testing them for the disease. Samples showing antibodies are traced back to the herd of origin. In Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, owners of infected herds are required to take active steps to eliminate infection; this work is not mandatory in North Carolina.

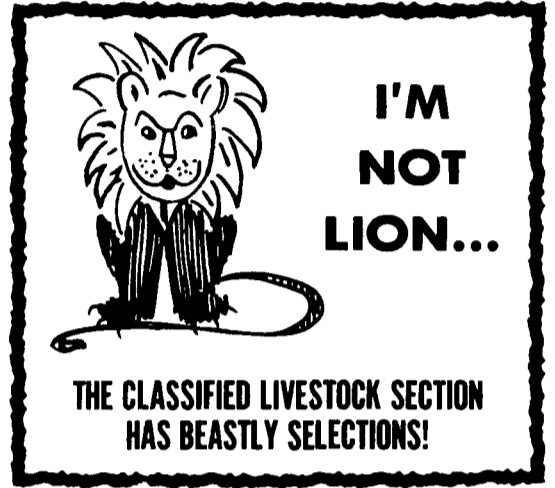
NORTH CAROLINA: North Carolina had 44 infected herds, seven of which were found through slaughter traceback. Owners of 20 herds decided to eradicate the

problem by testing the animals and sending reactors to slaughter. Quarantines have been released for 12 herds.

PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania had 28 infected herds, 11 of which were found through slaughter traceback. Officials report that 17 of the infected premises are feedlots that finish animals originating from infected breeding herds. This procedure helps breeding herds clean up more rapidly. Pseudorabies eradication in 26 herds is being done through slaughter and

restocking. Two herds have completed the process and have been released from quarantine. One other infected farm, which removed only reactor swine, also successfully eliminated the infection and was released from quarantine.

WISCONSIN: Wisconsin had 14 infected herds, and no new ones have been found through slaughter sampling. Owners of six herds have developed plans to eliminate all animals and restock, and one has completed this process.



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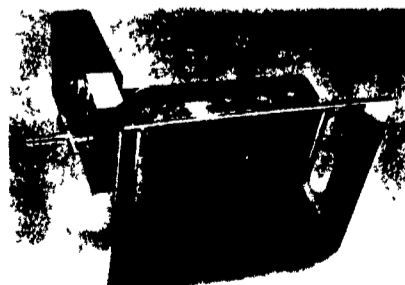
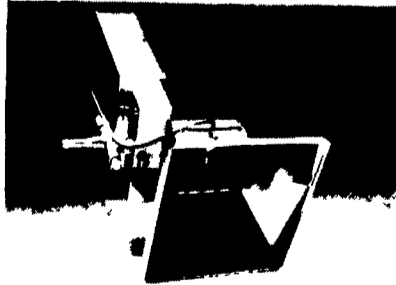
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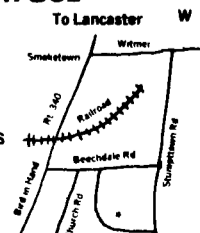
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