

Peoria seminar addresses pseudorabies problem

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The Pennsylvania State University UNIVERSITY PARK — Pork industry leaders met in Peoria, Pa. on Jan. 20 and 21 to discuss the future of pseudorabies control and the prospects for eradication. About 200 people attended the National Pork Producers Council-sponsored seminar and they represented a broad cross-section of pork producers, researchers, regulatory and extension personnel, practicing veterinarians and allied agribusiness groups. Out of this meeting will emerge recommendations for future strategy toward this disease.

Pseudorabies is a virus disease of pigs as well as other mammals that has been of major concern to the pork industry in the past decade. Pseudorabies does not, however, affect humans. While pseudorabies (PR) is widespread in the Midwest, the infection has been diagnosed in only a small area of southwestern Pennsylvania. A national slaughter survey conducted in 1984 revealed that 8.5 percent of market hogs carry antibodies against PR, a sign that they have been exposed to the disease or to PR vaccine.

Participants at the Peoria symposium discussed the changing nature of the clinical disease. Explosive outbreaks of abortions, stillbirths and baby pig losses are uncommon today but can occur with exposure of a highly susceptible herd to a large dose of virus. Most PR herd episodes are clinically inapparent, although reproductive efficiency and feed efficiency may be affected. Pneumonia in feeder-age pigs is increasingly being recognized as one form of PR.

Special Swine Report

New Technology

University and industry researchers are developing tools for diagnosis and control of pseudorabies. Today, serum neutralization and ELISA blood tests are the standard test for PR antibodies. Two new tests, a latex agglutination test and an ELISA-card test will soon be available. Each will take 10 minutes or less to run and can appreciably speed up the identification of positive hogs.

At least five companies are currently developing subunit vaccines. These high-tech products of genetic engineering may simplify the problem of identifying blood test positives as either infection-caused or vaccine-caused. Another new vaccine, with the impressive name of thimadine-kinase deficient mutant, is being field tested and may offer superior protection than currently available vaccines. Manufacturers of several of the new types of vaccines expect to have USDA approval by late 1986.

Controlling Pseudorabies

Experience gained in Pennsylvania and four other PR pilot project states, as well as continuing research, is giving us some new insight into how the disease spreads and what control methods are most effective.

Movement of swine is the major source of spread. Other animals, domestic and wild, can spread PR, but swine are the only significant reservoirs of the virus. Cold and moisture maintain the virus, but

heat and drying rapidly kill the virus. Recovered carriers will shed the virus during periods of stress, especially at farrowing.

The Livestock Conservation Institute has developed suggested clean-up plans for individual herds. An updated version of these guidelines reflecting new findings from the five state pilot projects will be available during March '86; clean-up options include: - Test and removal of blood test positives. - Offspring segregation with or without vaccine use. - Depopulation and repopulation.

Each of these options has variations to meet individual farm needs. Any clean-up plan must meet state regulatory requirements.

Important elements in any control procedure are sanitation, traffic control, reduction of pig density and frequent testing. Blood testing of a statistical sampling of each herd or group may yield adequate information to assess infection status. With killed vaccine use, blood titers decline within two to four months after vaccination unless field virus is present.

The Total Cost

At the Peoria seminar, participants had ample opportunity to discuss both the economic and emotional costs of pseudorabies and PR control. Owners of PR-infected herds varied in the assessment of dollar losses. Some felt that health and productivity were unaffected. Estimates of dollar losses due to a PR acute

outbreak in the Marshall County, Iowa pilot project was \$153 per sow, while the losses sustained in a chronic PR herd were \$119 per sow. Many owners of quarantined PR herds attested to severe psychological stresses due to quarantine, economic losses, government regulations, and public pressure.

Almost all participants in the PR Symposium supported PR eradication as a nationwide goal. Some felt that the current economic situation and/or the lack

of adequate technological tools made immediate steps toward eradication undesirable. A widely-expressed sentiment was that all segments of the pork industry and perhaps other segments of the livestock industry at risk should share in the costs of eradication.

The debate on pseudorabies eradication, both here in Pennsylvania and across the nation, is bound to continue. This recent conference in Peoria has moved up a step closer to a national consensus on where we go from here.

Lancaster slates pseudorabies meeting

LANCASTER — Dr. David Thawley, a national authority on swine pseudorabies will address an open public meeting scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 5, 1986 from 1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center, Arcadia Road, Lancaster. Dr. Thawley, of the Veterinary Microbiology Department, University of Missouri, serves on the National PRV Technical Committee involved with PRV Pilot projects in cooperation with the National Pork Producers Council and USDA.

Dr. Thawley will bring the group up to date on current PRV issues and will report on the PRV Symposium - Follow-up on Pilot Projects held recently in Peoria, Illinois.

While in Pennsylvania, Dr. Thawley will also address the Pennsylvania PRV Planning Committee and meet with State Secretary of Agriculture, Richard Grubb and BAI Chief Max A. Van Buskirk.

Wheat offer to Zaire

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced that a wheat offer to Zaire will be the fourteenth initiative under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Export Enhancement Program. As with previous announcements under this program, sales will be made at competitive world prices.

USDA said this program will give U.S. exporters the opportunity to sell up to 40,000 metric tons of wheat including a Commodity

Credit Corporation bonus in the form of wheat to be provided to U.S. exporters from CCC stocks. The CCC bonus will enable U.S. exporters to compete at commercial prices in the Zaire market in response to future tenders for wheat.

The announcement and invitation for offers from exporters will be issued in the near future. For further information call William R. Randolph, (202) 382-9254 or Larry T. McElvain (202) 447-6225.

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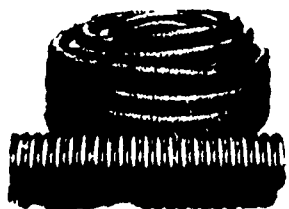
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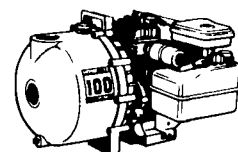
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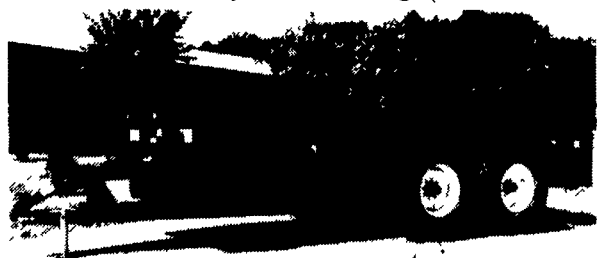
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