

PDA urges strict bio-security measures

HARRISBURG — State Agriculture officials are urging Pennsylvania's \$450 million poultry industry to observe biosecurity and continue strict sanitation measures to avoid unintentional spread of avian influenza.

"Studies conducted by state and federal epidemiologists indicate that live bird haulers operating in interstate commerce may have been responsible for the re-introduction of avian influenza into Pennsylvania," said state Agriculture Secretary Richard E. Grubb.

Dr. Van Buskirk, director of the

Bureau of Animal Industry, told the poultry industry, "It is imperative that proper sanitary procedures be adopted to prevent the introduction and spread of contagious diseases in your industry. It is equally important to assure our neighbors that every possible precaution is being taken to protect them.

"We urge you to adopt strict sanitary procedures for your program. This must include comprehensive measures to assure that all poultry crates, equipment and vehicles are properly cleaned and disinfected after each use. Shipments of live

poultry and eggs in unsanitary crates should be rejected. Wooden and fiber crates and packing materials should be replaced with impervious materials (plastic or metal) as soon as possible. Provision should be made at or near your facility to permit cleaning and disinfection of crates, equipment and vehicles immediately after unloading. Dead birds, manure, bedding and other waste materials must be disposed of in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner.

"Sanitary shipment of livestock is not easy or cheap. Neither is management of an outbreak of contagious disease," Van Buskirk said.

Van Buskirk said the Department is also advising poultry producers and shippers to call ahead if moving poultry products to interstate markets.

"The Pennsylvania poultry industry faces stringent constraints on interstate and international movement of its products," Van Buskirk said. "Prior permits will insure proper delivery by meeting all requirements established by other states.



Beef Briefs

by
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The Feedlot Environment

We know feedlot cattle are fed under many different conditions from the open lots of the southwest U.S. to the tightly enclosed barns of southeastern Pennsylvania. But under what set of conditions will growth and feed efficiency be optimized? The results of a series of trials from 1979 to 1984 in Iowa were recently summarized in the 1986 Iowa Beef Cattle Research Report.

Environmental conditions were either in an open lot, an open lot with a three-sided shelter or in a confinement building with one side open. Cattle weighing about 700 pounds at the start were used in all trials and they were all fed a high energy ration. Cattle were started at 60-day intervals to study the effects of season of the year on cattle performance. Results are shown in tables 1 and 2.

This series of feeding trials can cause us to speculate about a lot of commonly accepted beliefs. How much environmental control can we afford? When should we be feeding cattle? With the justifiable concern about water quality and pollution control how should we design our feedlots? Taken over all months of starting on feed, the cattle that could choose their own environment (shelter) gained faster and had more desirable feed conversions than either of the other groups. The confinement cattle did not out perform the shelterless cattle in any month for rate of gain. However the Iowa open lots may have been better designed and managed than many in Pennsylvania. They did have slightly improved feed conversions for November and March started cattle but these differences were not significant.

We should keep in mind that southeastern Pennsylvania averages about five inches of rainfall per year than Iowa. That increases the problems associated with runoff and pollution. With our

population, pollution and water quality problems it is doubtful we can ever justify open lot cattle feedlots in Pennsylvania. The predictable pollution and runoff problems will not be tolerated in the future.

The results of these trials indicate that in many of our confinement and semiconfinement situations we should pay a lot more attention to ventilation and cattle comfort. Too many times the environment we design is for the comfort of the cattle feeder rather than the cattle. They need protection from cold rains and winds and may benefit from shade in the summer. But we should remember that the thermoneutral temperature for cattle is about 50 degrees F., rather than the 70-plus degrees where we are most comfortable. Therefore, we probably over design cattle housing for feedlot cattle. Opening up the ridge, eyes and side walls in the summer will improve cattle performance.

The differences observed according to when cattle were started on feed are interesting but may not have practical application. We have to consider when our feeds and labor are available as well as when sufficient numbers of feeder cattle can be purchased. The other important variable is seasonality of prices. Cattle started on feed in the spring to market in the fall and compete with grass cattle and the heavy runs of cull cows. These trials were with yearling type cattle. The results could be different for calves as far as the effects of shelter were concerned.

This data does indicate that cattle can select the environment where they will optimize performance. Maybe we can't give them the chance under all conditions, but we can make an attempt to improve ventilation and environmental conditions.

Table 1 Average Daily Gain (Lb) by Housing and Month Started

Started on test	Shelter	Shelterless	Confinement	Average
November	2 40	2 17	2 02	2 20
January	2 72	2 42	2 21	2 45
March	3 03	2 96	2 64	2 88
May	3 23	3 10	2 73	3 02
July	3 07	2 92	2 72	2 91
September	2 58	2 42	2 12	2 37
Average	2 84	2 66	2 41	

Table 2 Feed Efficiency by Housing and Month Started on Test*

Started on Test	Shelter	Shelterless	Confinement	Average
November	6 77	7 34	7 23	7 12
January	6 37	6 79	6 99	6 72
March	5 80	5 90	5 77	5 82
May	5 63	5 60	5 94	5 72
July	5 62	5 67	5 70	5 66
September	6 69	7 26	7 29	7 08
Average	6 15	6 42	6 49	

* Pounds of dry matter per pound of gain

Toll-free flu hotline announced

HARRISBURG — State Agriculture Secretary Richard E. Grubb has announced a toll-free number is available to address farmers' concerns over the outbreak of avian influenza in central Pennsylvania.

Farmers and processors requesting information may call 1-800-932-0904. The number will be manned from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Information concerning specific marketing questions for processors, buyers, brokers and retailers will also be addressed.

"Use of this number can facilitate the efficient, timely flow of information," said Grubb. "We are committed to utilizing state resources to quickly control the outbreak and to protect the state's poultry industry," he added.

Delaware poultry auctions ordered to halt sales

DOVER, Del. — Delaware Agriculture Secretary William B. Chandler, Jr. and State Veterinarian Dr. H. Wesley Towers, Jr. have ordered poultry auctions in Delaware to cease sales in light of recent avian influenza (AI) outbreaks in Pennsylvania.

In making the announcement, Dr. Towers said the decision to

cease poultry auctions is strictly a precautionary measure designed to keep the highly contagious AI from spreading into Delaware's multi-million dollar poultry industry.

The ban is effective at midnight Jan. 24, and will be reevaluated in 30 days. Delaware's three poultry auctions affected are Wilson's Auction in Lincoln, Carroll's Sales

in Felton, and Spence's in Dover.

Agricultural officials remind poultry farmers and others that avian influenza is easily spread and urge Delawareans to avoid any contact with infected areas. Avian influenza, although deadly to chickens and turkeys, is absolutely no risk to human health through direct contact or by consumption of poultry and eggs.

NPPC to survey pork producers on checkoff plan

DES MOINES, Iowa — The National Pork Producers Council has begun working with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in formulating a final order that will implement the new 100 percent Pork Producer Investment Plan recently signed into law by President Reagan.

A time table for implementation of the plan is under discussion, and the AMS staff has expressed its intent to respond as nearly as possible to producer desires within the framework of the new law. The best present estimate is that the new checkoff plan will be implemented in late 1986.

NPPC has launched an extensive effort to make the nation's pork producers, whether or not they are members of NPPC, aware of the new checkoff plan and its contents. All U.S. pork producers will participate in the 100 percent checkoff, along with all importers of foreign hogs and pork products.

NPPC is urging all pork producers to take part in a survey to determine how they would like to see the new checkoff funds invested. Results of the survey will be an important consideration for

the eventual investment decisions to be made by pork producer leaders.

The producer survey will be included in the February issue of National Hog Farmer magazine, and the February issue of NPPC's own monthly member publication, Pork Report. The survey form is also available from state pork producer associations or NPPC headquarters at P.O. Box 10383,

Des Moines, IA 50306.

Pork Producers are urged to call a special toll-free phone number at NPPC in Des Moines if they have any questions about the 100 percent plan or any NPPC program or project. The toll-free number may be reached by dialing 1-800-255-2255, code, 7675, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Central time, Monday through Friday.

Southeast Sheep Producers Meeting scheduled

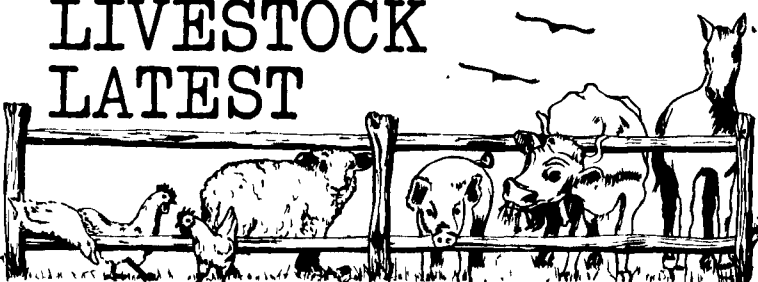
CREAMERY — A Southeast Pennsylvania Sheep Producers Meeting is scheduled for Tues. Feb. 11, at the Meyers Family Restaurant, Route 309 in Quakertown.

The meeting will feature Clair Engle, Extension animal scientist, and Dr. Sid Bosworth, Extension agronomist, both from the Pennsylvania State University. Registration and coffee will be from 9:30-10 a.m. At 10 a.m. Engle will begin the program with the topic "Matching Nutrition to Ewe

Production", followed by Dr. Bosworth with "Developing a Pasture and Forage Program" which will include information on how to utilize forages in your feeding program, grasses and alternate crops to consider, and the use of brassicas.

From 12 noon to 1 p.m. will be a lunch break and the opportunity to meet other producers. At 1 p.m. Mr. Engle will continue with "Feeding for Market Lamb Production" which will include birth through market weight, ideas on additives, and marketing concerns. He will also touch on information about the Rocco Foods contract sheep production and how it might be of interest to local producers. The final topic will be "Pasture and Forage Maintenance" by Dr. Bosworth who will discuss the basics of soil fertility, establishing a pasture and the cutting and grazing management of pastures.

LIVESTOCK LATEST



Cost for the seminar is \$5.50 per person which includes registration fee, written materials, lunch, gratuity and coffee break. To register, contact your local Extension Service. Pre-registration is

a must and should be done by Feb. 5.

In case of snow on that day please contact the office at 489-4315 or the restaurant at 536-4422 if there is any question of having the event.