

Avian Flu Monitor

Lancaster avian flu report is false alarm

BY JACK HUBLEY

LANCASTER — Lancaster County's poultry industry breathed a sigh of relief last week when a Denver-area flock of guineas and chukars mistakenly diagnosed as victims of avian flu were found to be free of the H5N2 virus.

The false alarm was sounded on Feb. 7, when the National Veterinary Services Lab in Ames, Iowa reported that the flock of 11,500 birds contained the H5 component of the deadly H5N2 avian influenza virus. The flock was scheduled for depopulation on Feb. 10.

Subsequent tests, however, revealed that the virus was in fact a swine virus identified as H1N1.

But this does not mean that the state's top poultry and egg producing county can afford to drop its guard, cautioned county extension director, Jay Irwin. "We've really got to maintain tight security," Irwin emphasized. "With this colder weather the virus lives longer, so there's more chance to move it around."

Many area poultry haulers have, in fact, not relaxed their cleanup producers since the virus claimed some 16 million birds in the outbreak that swept the state two years ago. Bill Risser, president of Risser Poultry, Inc, located in Lititz, notes that his company has continued to exercise strict sanitation procedures. "We've been cleaning and disinfecting after every use," notes Risser, whose firm trucks spent laying hens to two processing plants in New Jersey. As required in the Secretary of Agriculture's recently invoked quarantine order, Risser's trucks have been carrying a "C&D paper" as documentation with every load.

"The threat of another epidemic is very present in our minds," says Ben Burkholder of Victor F. Weaver. The New Holland-based poultry processing firm has maintained most of its cleaning and disinfecting procedures since the 1984 outbreak, Burkholder says.

All poultry hauling trucks are washed and disinfected after moving birds, Burkholder points out. At the present time, however, the firm is not disinfecting every truck that arrives on company property as was done during the 1984 epidemic.

Following the Lancaster County incident, infected flocks continued

to be uncovered last weekend. A Snyder County flock of 50,000 broilers located near Winfield was depopulated on Wednesday, and a 21,000-bird layer flock located near Pitman in Schuylkill County was destroyed on Thursday.

Intensified surveillance continues to be practiced in counties where the virus has been

discovered, according to Penn State avian disease expert Dr. David Kradel. Task force members are testing fresh mortalities from all flocks known to have been visited by poultry haulers that were identified as carriers of the disease. Dead birds from 150 to 170 such farms are being tested at least once a week, Kradel said.

USDA announces loan rates

WASHINGTON — Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block has announced provisions of the 1986 price support programs for upland cotton, feed grains, rice and wheat.

The programs include required acreage reductions of 20 percent for feed grains, 35 percent for rice, 25 percent for wheat, and 25 percent for cotton. Included in these reductions is a 2 1/2 percent paid land diversion for wheat and feed grain producers.

Signup for the farm programs is anticipated to begin in early March.

The 1986 loan rates (per bushel), will be \$1.56 for barley, \$1.92 for corn, \$.99 for oats, \$1.82 for sorghum, \$1.63 for rye, and \$2.40 for wheat.

Target prices will be the same in 1986 as were in effect for 1985 crops. They are (per bushel): barley, \$2.60; corn, \$3.03; oats, \$1.60; sorghum, \$2.88; wheat, \$4.38.

Producers are eligible to earn deficiency payments on the acreage planted within the extent permitted. Producers who plant at least 50 percent of the permitted acreage to the program crop and plant the remaining permitted acreage to a non-program crop, other than soybeans or extra long

staple cotton, will be eligible to receive deficiency payments on 92 percent of the permitted acreage.

Winter wheat producers who reduce the acreage planted to wheat on the farm for harvest so that it does not exceed 65 percent of the farm wheat base may be eligible to receive diversion payments on an acreage equivalent to 10 percent of the wheat base.

Implementation of discretionary

provisions relating to payments in commodities and other contractual provisions will be announced later.

Individual producers will be notified on their farm acreage bases and program yields by their county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service offices.

Haying and grazing will be permitted on acreage conservation reserve land at the request of individual state ASC committees. However, haying or grazing will

not be permitted on the acreage during the five principal growing months as designated by county ASC committees. Block also approved a standby measure authorizing, in the event of a natural disaster, implementation of emergency haying and grazing privileges. Approval of the emergency privileges would be made as needed on a county-by-county basis.

Sheep numbers

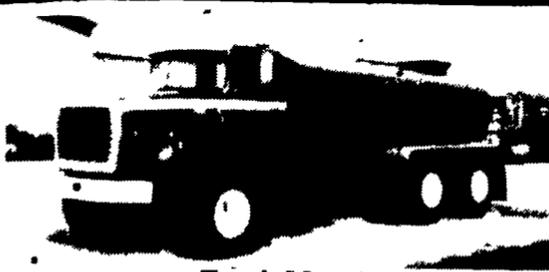
HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania's inventory of all sheep and lambs on its 4,900 sheep farms January 1 was 93,000, up six percent from the record low inventory of Jan. 1, 1985, according to the Pennsylvania Crop and Livestock Reporting Service. Of the total, 68,000 were ewes one year and older, 6,000 head were rams and wethers one year and older, 14,000 were ewe lambs, and 5,000 were ram and wether lambs. The inventory value of all sheep and lambs was \$7.8 million, up 32 percent from January 1, 1985. Average value per head increased \$17.00 to \$84.00 per head.

Total U.S. inventory is estimated at 9.93 million head, down five percent from the 10.4 million head a year earlier. The value of all sheep and lambs on hand January 1, 1986, totaled \$670 million, up five percent from a year ago. The average value per head was \$67.40, up \$6.30 from last year. Stock sheep inventory dropped to a record low 8.44 million head, five percent below Jan. 1, 1985. Ewes one year old and older, at 6.78 million head were down six percent. Ewes lambs increased three percent to 1.04 million. Wether and ram lambs were 11 percent more than last year.

The 1985 Pennsylvania lamb crop was 75,000 head, six percent below 1984. Breeding ewes one year old and older on January 1, 1985 were 67,000 compared with 77,000 a year earlier. Lambs saved per 100 ewes one year old and older was 112 in 1985 compared with 104 in 1984.

The 1985 U.S. lamb crop of 7.38 million head declined five percent from the 1984 lamb crop. Breeding ewes one year old and older on January 1, 1985, were down eight percent from the previous year. The 1985 lambing rate was 102 lambs per 100 ewes one year old and older, compared with 99 in 1984 and 98 in 1983.

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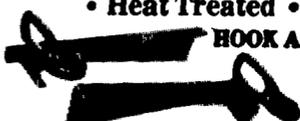
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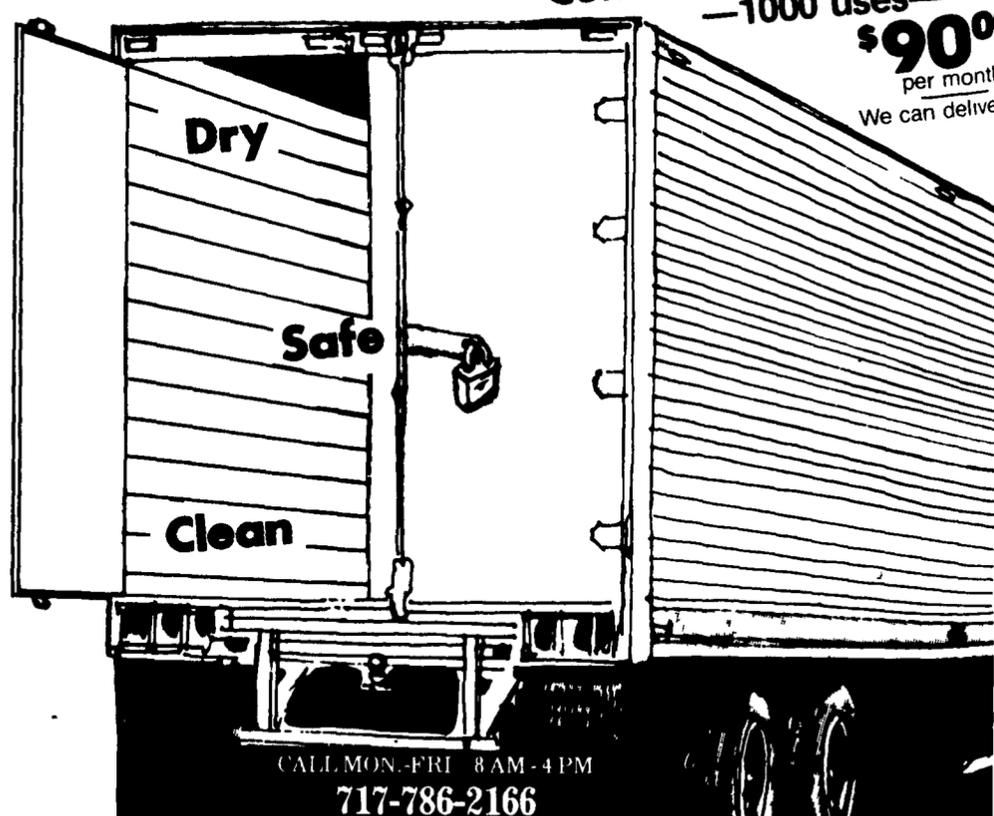
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