

Bovine TB incidents on increase in 1985

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture is advising cattle and dairy producers not to become complacent about bovine tuberculosis. Although the incidence of the disease has been reduced dramatically since its peak earlier in this century, recent figures show bovine tuberculosis is reappearing in several states around the country.

"Too many farmers believe tuberculosis in cattle has been eradicated," says Bert W. Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "This chronic

and acute infectious disease will continue to be a threat to dairy and beef livestock until the last infected herd has been eliminated."

In 1985, 30 tuberculosis-infected herds, the largest number reported since 1976, were detected in eight states. From 1980 through 1984, an average of only 10 infected herds were found each year nationwide.

Three states, North Carolina, Virginia and New Mexico, last year lost their USDA accreditation as bovine tuberculosis-free. A state loses such accreditation if two or more infected herds are found within its borders within a four-year period. Other infected herds were detected last year in Hawaii,

Kansas, Louisiana, Ohio and Texas.

"If the number of TB-infected cattle herds continues to increase," warns Hawkins, "the future looks bleak for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis from the United States."

Near the beginning of this century, bovine tuberculosis was the biggest livestock disease in the country, infecting one in every 20 head of cattle. USDA helped launch an assault on the disease in 1917 with the establishment of the Cooperative State-Federal Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Program. Systematic testing in each state began in 1924. When an area or county was found to have fewer than one-half of 1 percent infected animals, it was declared "modified accredited tuberculosis free."

By 1940, all states had achieved modified-accredited status. Cattle producers began to believe the costly disease may have been

eradicated.

"But many made the mistake of thinking the disease had been conquered once and for all," says Hawkins. "Producers forgot about the need to continue testing."

In the early 1960's, USDA instituted a national slaughter-surveillance traceback program for cattle brucellosis. This program, in which animals exhibiting tuberculosis lesions at slaughter plants are traced to their herds of origin, is today the primary means for detecting infected herds.

Because bovine tuberculosis can have a long incubation period, says Hawkins, a cow purchased today with a latent infection can eventually become a reservoir of infection to other animals even if it shows no signs of the disease. Clinical symptoms may not appear until up to 10 years after initial infection.

"Owners should continue to have their live cattle tested for tuberculosis," Hawkins advises. "It is the most effective way to detect the disease in its early stages, and it is an important tool in con-

trolling the disease given today's practice of mass movement of cattle."

Hawkins urges every cattle producer to follow four steps to prevent further spread of bovine tuberculosis:

1. Have dairy or beef breeding herds tested for TB periodically by an accredited veterinarian.

2. Insist on a negative tuberculin test before buying a replacement animal.

3. Isolate every new replacement animal for 60 days, and have the animal retested for tuberculosis at the end of this period.

4. Make certain all animals sold to slaughter are properly backtagged. If tuberculosis is detected at slaughter, an immediate traceback to the herd of origin will be possible.

"While these procedures may be time-consuming," says Hawkins, "cattle producers should think of them as protecting their income and investment. They're the best insurance against buying an infected animal that could transmit tuberculosis to other animals in the herd."

More time to apply for milk promotion funds

ROBESONIA — Local dairy promotion committee have an extra two weeks to apply for funds from the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, according to PDPP Board Chairman Don Duncan, Robesonia.

The deadline has been extended from April 15 to April 30 at the request of several local committees, said the Berks County dairyman.

A full \$35,000 in funds has been approved. The money must be used in the second half of the 1986 calendar year.

Only Pennsylvania groups are eligible for milk promotion dollars, Duncan said.

Radio advertising is limited to \$600 per station, he explained, with the local committee picking up 25% of the cost. In addition, only radio ads prepared for the dairy program may be used.

Capital investments for milkshake machines and other dairy-related equipment also get a helping hand, the Board chairman added. PDPP will pay one-fourth the cost up to a maximum of \$1,000.

Milk promotion plans and a detailed budget should be sent by April 30 to Cindy Weimer, promotion coordinator, Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408.

Call (717) 787-6903 for applications. Remember, the deadline is April 30.

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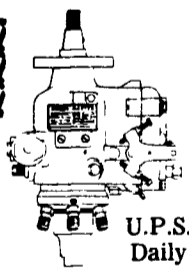
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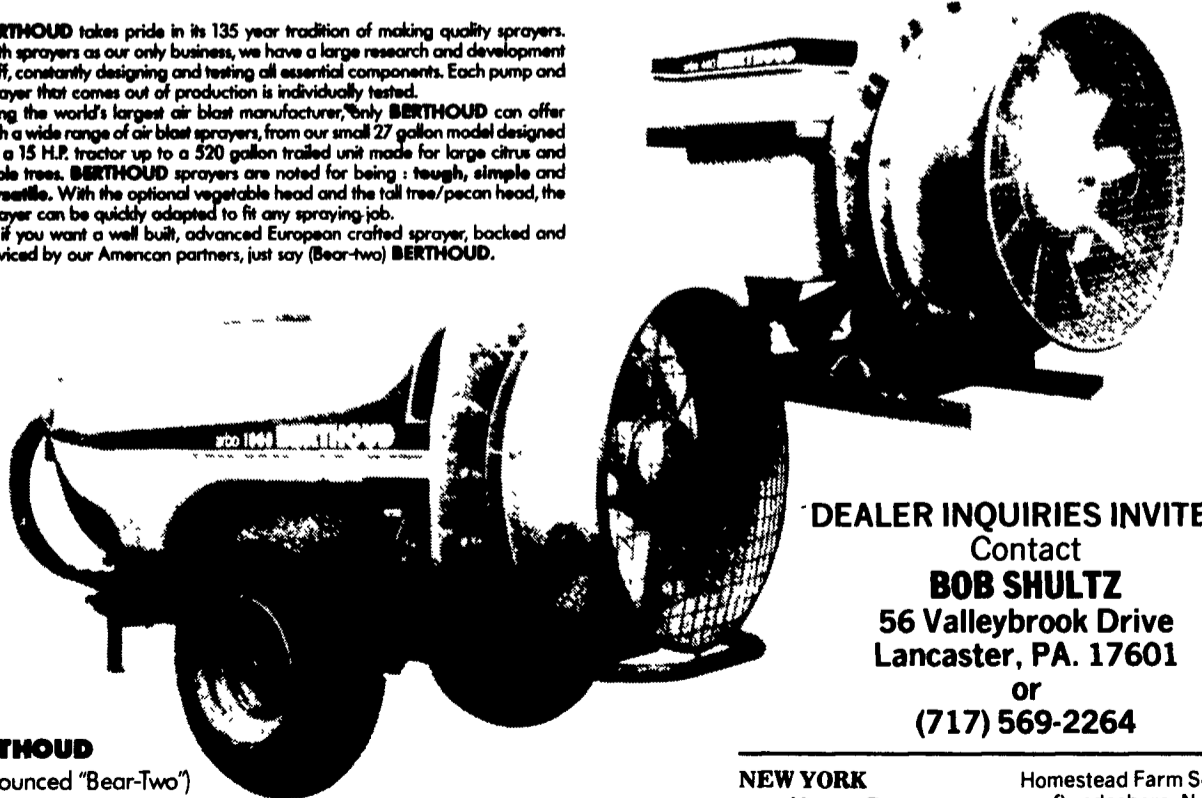
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