

Veal Industry Under Pressure

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than \$500 or imprisonment, not to exceed one month or both.

Steve Connelly, special assistant to Maryland Ag Secretary Wayne Cawley, said that one of the deciding factors in the change in objective in Senate Bill 501 was the homemade video that farmers at the hearing showed of themselves and their operations. "Senator Garrott has been very fair with us," Connelly said. "She thought there was a problem and she wanted to find out."

Alex Hershaf, president, Farm Animal Reform Movement (FARM) said, "We lost this one because we had other pressing work and didn't come in prepared. But we have long range and short range goals. In 30 to 40 years we hope to eliminate the exploitation of farm animals and in the short term, we hope to introduce legislation in as many states as possible to help farm animals now."

FARM helped originate the Maryland senate legislation and Hershaf defended the bills at last week's hearings.

"We knew it would be coming," said Jack Miller, legislative representative, Maryland Farm Bureau. "A large number of animal rights groups have headquarters close by in Washington. And after the referendum in Massachusetts last fall, we expected Maryland's veal industry to be an easy target."

Boyd Cook, division manager, Dairymen, Inc. agrees. "They (the Coalition to End Animal Suffering and Exploitation) tried Massachusetts and we were surprised at the overwhelming vote against it," Cook said. "But we knew Maryland would be next because we are so close to Washington DC."

Cook said that because the veal industry uses a large number of the dairy industry's excess bull calves, the veal and dairy industries work together.

Dr. Mike Rodebaugh, state ag commission and past president of the Maryland Veterinarian Association, says these laws really seek to manage agriculture from people who know nothing about it. In the dairy industry, when we move calves from individual pens to groups, they have a tendency to develop respiratory diseases and they must establish a pecking order. He said the animal's healthy appearance and good weight gain prove the animal is not stressed.

But Gene Bauston, director, Farm Sanctuary, Rockland, DE, says that the veal industry's gauge of weight gain to indicate health and happiness is not adequate. "The animal needs to be able to have natural behavior patterns,"

Bauston said. "A calf in a crate is not able to walk around so respiratory diseases may result because it doesn't breathe deeply enough".

Bauston has seen an evolution of improvement in animal husbandry since animal welfare groups used the media to publicize what he calls bad practices. But as for veal production, Bauston supports the idea that a calf should be fed hay. This practice, he knows, would eliminate a whole segment of the veal industry that produces white meat from a balanced diet of milk replacer. But Bauston calls the white veal "anemic" because he says the calf is deprived of iron. And he claims a study shows that there is no difference in consumer preference for white over pink veal.

Pink veal is produced from a grazing operation that includes solid feed to activate the ruminant. This type veal would have formerly been called "Baby Beef" and according to Bauston can be raised more humanely.

A grower of this "free range" type veal and a spokesman for alternative veal production is James Nicholl, Brightwood, VA. Nicholl leaves his veal calves with the mother cow for three to four months or until the veal calf is grown. The cows and calves are pastured all year with woodlands or buildings to protect the cows and calves from the elements as required. He tries to get the mother cow to accept the second calf for the last part of the lactation if possible. And he uses artificial insemination to produce cross-bred calves for his operation.

Nicholl has developed a private trade from individuals and restaurants for the pink veal he produces under the tradename of Summerfield Farm Products. "I think the exercise my calves get helps the quality of the meat I produce. And my calves get no additional iron except what's in the mother's milk. Solid feed comes from what they steal from their mothers."

Nicholl disagrees that the public has no preference for white or pink veal. He says the chefs in expensive restaurants like to use their own special sauces on white veal. And he finds that he must sell his customers on his product. "I think the public has been sold on "milk fed" veal that is associated with the white type veal," Nicholl said. "But when I show them how my veal is raised, and they taste the difference, they like Summerfield Veal."

Barbara Hoffman, Fremont, WI, who raises 1800 veal calves each year and speaks for the American Veal Association, takes strong exception to the idea that veal calves are kept anemic. "The light color comes from milk feed and youth," Hoffman said. "We feed them iron and give regular blood tests to see that the calves are not anemic. At

the first sign of an anemic calf we give them booster shots."

Hoffman also said modern calf barns now have windows, ventilation and heating in winter. "Any person who raises veal knows ventilation is the most important factor in healthy calves. And we leave the lights on 24 hours a day. It's 10 degrees below zero here now," Hoffman said at the time of the interview. "And my calves are in 70 degree barns. I know they are contented and better off than running around out in the cold."

Calves are tied in individual stalls with a small partition at the shoulders to keep them from defecating or stepping on their neighbor or eating their neighbor's feed. The calves sleep in a normal position and can get up and down and groom themselves at will.

"We believe we are raising veal calves in the best environment for the calf as well as the farmer," Hoffman said. "Individual stalls give a greater livability rate, help the farmer to monitor each calf's eating habits and allow immediate detection of sickness. People who don't know calves

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Calf Rearing Study Copywrited In 1988

A research study related to "Artificially Rearing Calves" was completed at Texas A&M University Ag Experiment Station and a report was copywrited in 1988. This study by Ted Friend and Gisela Dellmeier takes an ethological view of the common practices and problems found in raising calves. Ethology looks at animal behavior in relation to habitat.

Friend and Dellmeier use an ethogram to catalogue "human perception of the richness and complexity of behaviors that optimize the welfare of an animal--in this case a calf. The authors show major bovine ethogram components to include: general postural behavior; ingestive behavior; locomotion/kinetics; sleeping/resting; body maintenance/grooming; social behavior; explorative behavior; eliminative behavior and circadian/diurnal rhythms.

From a locomotion/kinetics (body movement) study, the report says that maintaining calves in groups would appear to be the solution for common problems found in calves in small individual stalls. Problems such as impaired locomotor ability and learned helplessness. But little is known about the potential effects of the prevention of normal grooming.

Yet, the group housing method is subject to other problems which farmers have to contend. The report lists: inter-calf sucking, urine drinking and the regulation of feed intake as some of these problems.

Upper Dauphin County Area Crops Day

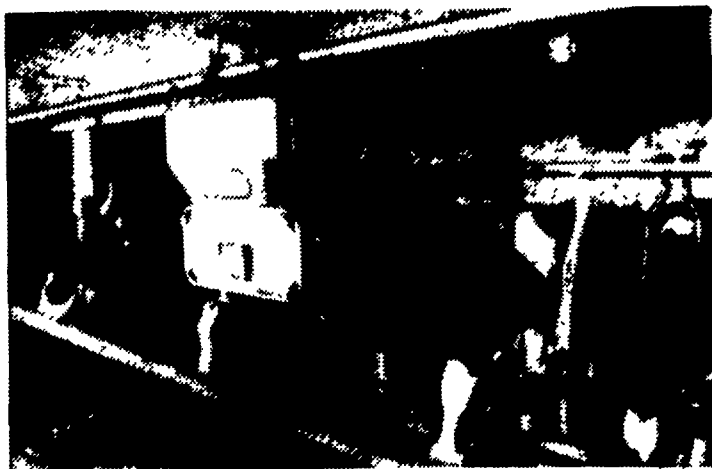
HARRISBURG (Dauphin) — The Upper Dauphin Young Farmers and Penn State College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension will hold a Dairy Producers meeting on Wednesday, March 22 at 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The morning session will be held at the Upper Dauphin High School Vocational Agriculture Department. After lunch, the program will travel to Crissinger's dairy farm on Route 25 west of Gratz.

Topics will include: Using Body Condition Scoring to Evaluate Dairy Herd Management, Water Quality Effects on Dairy Cattle, Dairy Cattle Health, and Nutrient Management.

The afternoon session will include hands on evaluation of body condition scoring at the Crissinger's dairy farm.

There is no cost for attendance. Lunch will be available from the school cafeteria. For more information and to make reservations, contact Stanley Weaver at the Upper Dauphin High School Vocational Agriculture Department (717) 362-3666, or Paul Craig at the Dauphin County Cooperative Extension office (717) 921-8803.

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