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HEXAMITIASIS — A DEADLY DISEASE RETURNS

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Hexamitiasis is a protozoan parasitic disease that affects a number of different types of poultry.

Turkeys, peafowl, ducks, and game birds (pheasants, quail, chukars) are particularly troubled with this disease. Even pigeons can be infected.

"Old timers" in the poultry industry called the disease infectious catarrhal enteritis. Strangely, chickens do not show sickness but they may carry the disease organism in their intestine and shed the parasite in their droppings.

Hexamitiasis was a major health

problem for the early turkey industry. It was a particular problem for turkey producers with multi-age farms. Mortality approaching 90 percent occurred in young poults that were not treated or properly managed. Young birds, 1 to 9 weeks of age, were most seriously affected; however, clinical disease was rarely seen in adult birds.

In recent years, hexamitiasis had all but disappeared in the commercial poultry industry. Its departure is believed due to the improvement in management practices and to the introduction of antiblackhead and nitrofurans drugs.

For all practical purposes, hexamitiasis was no longer a major health problem in commercial turkeys. Poultry diagnostic laboratories seldom saw the disease. Only 10 cases were reported in 1986 in the entire United States. No cases were reported in Pennsylvania turkeys in 1990 or 1991.

Recently the Pennsylvania

Poultry Diagnostic Laboratory had a case of turkey hexamitiasis. Why the sudden reappearance of a disease that has been rarely seen? The most likely explanation is the government's removal of drugs that were used to prevent and treat blackhead (a disease also caused by a protozoan parasite). These products (a variety of antiblackhead and nitrofurans drugs) effectively controlled blackhead and as a secondary benefit controlled hexamitiasis as well. The poultry industry may expect to see more hexamitiasis in the future.

In my next article, the symptoms, lesions, and control of hexamitiasis will be discussed. This discussion will help poultrymen recognize the disease if it should occur in one of their poultry flocks.

Regional Vegetable Meeting Set

POTTSVILLE (Schuylkill Co.) — A regional Schuylkill County vegetable meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 9, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Pine View Acres, Chamberlain Avenue, Pottsville.

Speakers for the meeting will be Dr. Shelby Fleischer, Penn State extension entomologist; Dr. Peter Ferretti, Penn State extension vegetable specialist; Dr. Michael Orzolek, Penn State extension vegetable specialist; and Dr. Alan MacNab, Penn State extension vegetable pathologist; and George Perry, horticulture agent.

Topics discussed will include insect control on vegetables - in-

depth presentation on three major vegetables, disease identification/integrated disease management for vegetables, herbicides and their safeness on vegetables, and the Chemsweep Program.

All vegetable growers are invited to attend this meeting sponsored by the Schuylkill County extension. Pesticide update credits will be issued at this meeting. Registration is required by Monday, February 1.

For additional information, contact George P. Perry Jr., county agent/horticulture, Schuylkill County Extension Office, P.O. Box 250, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972-0250, (717) 385-3431.

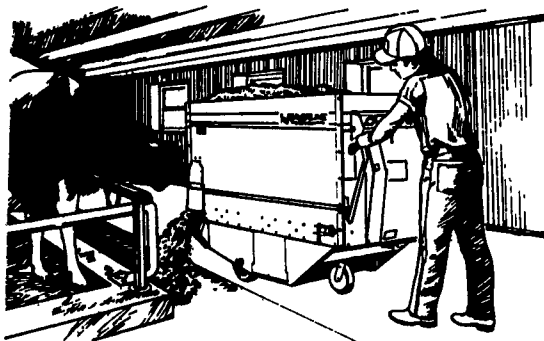
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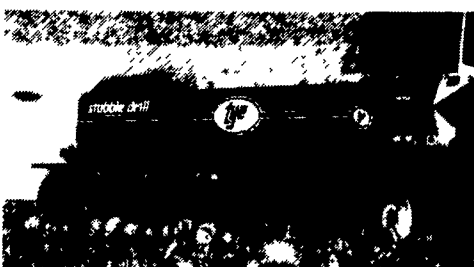


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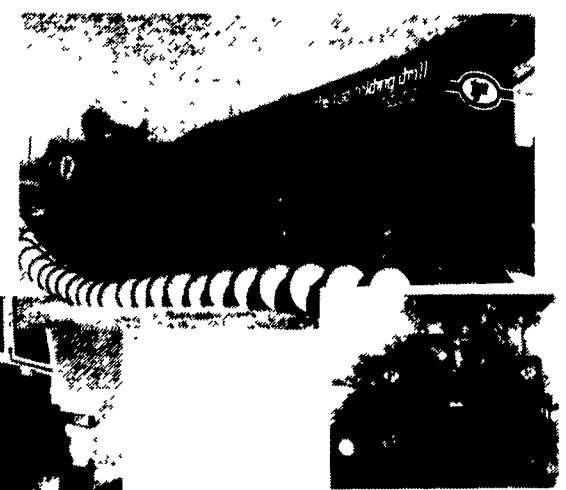
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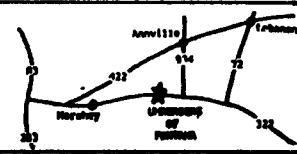
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