

University, Poultry Industry Control AI

NEWARK, Del. — A 190-degree soapy water bath sprayed under pressure of 3,000 pounds per square inch is a frontline defense against the avian influenza (AI) virus. As unlikely as it may sound, truck washes are an integral part of keeping AI out of commercial broiler flocks on the Delmarva Peninsula.

"High-pressure truck washes are in important biosecurity measure for keeping this disease from multiplying in Delmarva," said Dan Palmer, University of Delaware Cooperative Extension poultry specialist.

Although AI poses no threat to human health, its effect on the \$1.25-billion-per-year broiler industry and related grain industries on Delmarva could be devastating.

Poultry growers, broiler integrator companies, university researchers in the College of Agricultural Sciences, cooperative extension, state departments of agriculture, USDA, and the Delmarva Poultry Industry Inc. (DPI) have galvanized efforts to control spread of the disease since it was identified in Pennsylvania in January. Although no commercial flocks on Delmarva have been found to be positive for AI, exposure to the virus has been confirmed in two backyard flocks in Maryland.

To coordinate containment and eradication efforts, DPI publishes an emergency procedure manual on poultry disease that details steps to prevent introduction and spread of the disease. By following these procedures, university and industry personnel have been able to respond quickly and appropriately to the threat of AI.

Palmer and Cliff Hicklin, director of transportation for Allen's Family Foods, coordinated efforts to set up truck wash stations for all trucks headed to the Peninsula from outside points.

"The logistics of covering all major routes into the Peninsula have been mind-boggling," Palmer said.

The first route covered was for trucks coming onto the Peninsula from points north. Route 13 is the major access, and Tim's Truck Wash at routes 13 and 40 in Wilmington was ready to respond. Equipped with a wash pad and containment area for runoff from the wash, the station met all requirements. Owner Tim Eshelman stocked up on the required disinfectant and began washing 10 to 12 trucks per day. After a soapy bath, trucks are rinsed with hot water, then cold-rinsed with disinfectant.

Trucks that have been through the wash are issued certificates that allow the drivers entry to

poultry company facilities. Some companies may require trucks to go through an additional disinfectant wash at the gate to their grounds.

Covering other points of entry to the Peninsula hasn't been as simple as the Wilmington station. A temporary truck wash is on standby in Queen Anne's County, Md. There, a sewage-treatment plant in Stevensville on Kent Island already had a containment pad to collect wash water. By contracting with a portable truck-wash company, a satisfactory station has been set up to cover this truck route from western Pennsylvania if DPI feels it is needed.

Palmer says another wash, if needed, will be set up in Pocomoke City, Md. This portable station on Sharp Energy property will cover traffic from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

In addition to setting up biosecurity measures, university personnel have been extensively involved in virus isolation at laboratories in Newark under the direction of Dr. John K. Rosenberger, chair of the department of animal science and agricultural biotechnology. An active surveillance program also has been underway at the Poultry Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at the universi-

ty's Research and Education Center in Georgetown.

Under the direction of Dr. Ed Odor, poultry pathologist, the diagnostic laboratory assists federal and state veterinarians in collecting blood samples from flocks. These samples are analyzed for indications of AI. Odor says the laboratory in Georgetown has tested nearly 40 flocks. So far, AI has not been detected.

"Flocks are tested if birds have been bought or sold at the live-poultry markets where avian influenza was discovered," he said. "We've continued an exten-

sive surveillance of commercial flocks around Goldsboro, where AI was confirmed. All results have been negative. An extensive survey of backyard and commercial flocks near Laurel is now complete. All of these flocks also turned up negative."

During the month of February, DPI called a halt to educational seminars and meetings where large numbers of growers would interact and possibly spread AI. Only by the cooperation of all parties involved in the poultry industry can Delmarva's poultry be kept disease-free.

Northumberland Sets Conservation Banquet

SUNBURY (Northumberland Co.) — The Northumberland County Conservation District's annual awards banquet is scheduled for Thursday, March 25, at the Sunbury Social Club at 6:30 p.m.

Entertainment will be "America, I Still Hear Your Song" presented by Ron Reedy, professional photographer of Three R Productions. The multi-image visual journey throughout America reflects the rich and varied heritage of our country and accentuates its natural beauty.

Environmental awards will be

presented in the following categories: Conservation Farmer of the Year, Swank awards for youth and adult conservation organizations, J. Robert Hoffman Milton Kiwanis Club Scholarship Award, Conservation Teacher of the Year, Environmental Communications, Wildlife Conservation Award, and conservation district scouting awards.

A roast beef dinner will precede the award presentations and entertainment. Tickets for the event are \$7 and can be purchased by calling the Northumberland County Conservation District office at (717) 988-4224.

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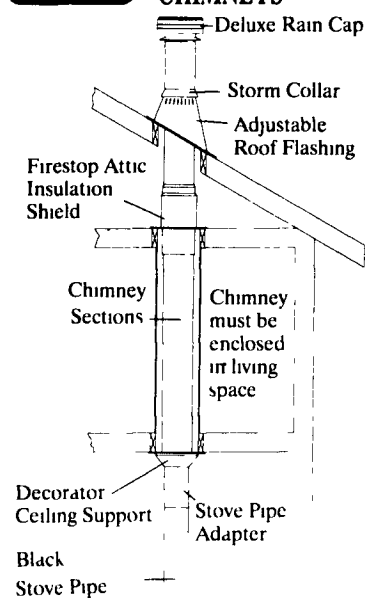
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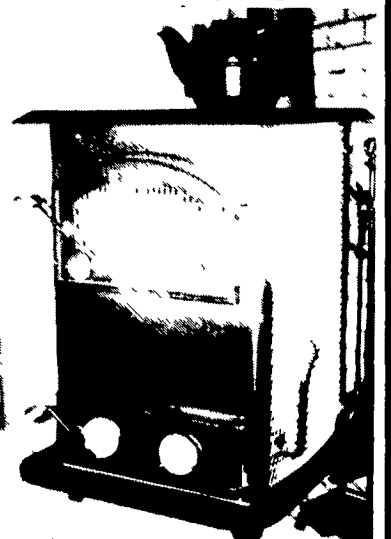
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