

Survey Indicates Biosecurity In Question When Fighting Pseudorabies

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ties, 38 percent never require coveralls. Of the three-quarters who responded, footbaths are never required in 49.2 percent of the cases. Change of footwear is never required in 28.8 percent of the cases.

• On question 34, how are dead animals disposed of, 6.3 percent of the respondents still spread them on the field. "Other" methods of disposal (not including picked up by rendering truck, buried, or burned) was checked by 16.1 percent of the respondents.

• On question 35, how promptly are dead animals disposed of, "when it's convenient" was checked by 20.4 percent of the respondents, and "other" by 4.2 percent.

• On question 33, do dogs, cats, or wildlife have access to feed storage, 44.7 percent said they did; on pig facilities, 47.4 percent said they did; to pigs, 39.2 percent said they did; and carcasses, 26.7 percent said they did.

• Pseudorabies was diagnosed on the herds of 34.1 percent of the respondents in the survey.

(The survey questions and answers are included with this article.)

The results of the survey, recently released, have generated alarm and in many cases shock from the agriculture community.

"I'm alarmed . . . that we haven't done a very good job of biosecurity," said Chet Hughes, Lancaster County livestock agent. "I think with the density of livestock in this area, biosecurity needs to be on the front burner in every-

body's mind. We cannot afford to take losses by disease."

The disease caused by the pseudorabies virus, PRV, first spread throughout the county in mid-April of 1980, according to *Lancaster Farming* records. The disease has plagued swine producers for many years, and the way it spreads between farms, according to Sischo in a column written specifically for this newspaper, "Pseudorabies Headline Update," is still a mystery. Symptoms mimic the disease called rabies, with convulsions, depression, and even blindness. In most cases, pseudorabies results in more stillbirths, which creates a huge loss of income for many breeding operations.

The survey itself, according to Sischo, will be used to help "identify management schemes that will be most helpful in stopping the spread of pseudorabies in Pennsylvania," he wrote in "Pseudorabies Headline Update."

"I'm not exactly sure, looking at the results, if there's a real blaring answer here," said Fisher, chair of the eradication program. "There's a lot of small pieces of answers that don't really tell you anything."

Fisher said that while he believes some PRV is spread by trucks, because of the density of hog farms in the county, in a stretch extending across the north central to northeast part of Lancaster County, he believes that natural air flow also contributes to the spread.

Fisher said that studies in Europe show that water droplets car-

ried through the air were documented to carry a virus "15 to 20 miles," he said.

While there has been PRV-positive herds identified throughout other parts of the county, and other counties as well, the incidence of pseudorabies is still great mostly in the "population-dense" area of northeastern Lancaster County.

More information regarding the survey will be available to producers at a meeting scheduled on Tuesday, November 23 at 7:30 p.m. at the Bergstrasse School in Ephrata. (More details about the meeting are scheduled in next week's *Lancaster Farming*.)

As for now, producers should take steps, after looking at the survey, to see what can be done about improving biosecurity on the farm, according to Fisher and Hughes.

"I thought that in the southeast, particularly in the two counties they focused on, Lancaster and Lebanon, that more people would be aware of biosecurity and would be doing a little better job of that, particularly since most of the industry is here and most of the disease is here," said Hughes, Lancaster livestock agent.

Hughes said that showers, if available, should always be used. He told *Lancaster Farming* that he was "alarmed" that so many producers don't require coveralls or footbaths.

The livestock agent said producers should require all those who enter and leave the facilities to change footwear or disinfect their boots before entering another

facility. If nothing else, then footbaths should be used regardless — an inexpensive way to fight the spread of PRV.

The survey was alarming to Hughes because it showed that nearly 50 percent of the producers don't require a footbath of those entering the facilities.

"To me, poor biosecurity can lead to lower profitability," he said. "When you see that a third of the producers aren't changing footwear, it points to a need for industry awareness."

He said all producers should take a second look at their biosecurity measures and take steps now to correct them.

Hughes said the disease can affect other livestock, and the spread of it could have a major economic impact on other types of

farming as well, if unchecked.

But Fisher, head of the state pork producers, said as chair of the program, a big problem is overcoming the myth that the producers are slow to do anything about stopping PRV. The National Pork Producers Council, together with the Livestock Conservation Institute and USDA, state and local affiliates, has set the year 2000 as the date for the total elimination of the disease.

"The biggest problem I've had is overcoming the thinking from Washington that Pennsylvania producers don't want to cooperate, that they don't care," he said. "I've heard this time and time again, that we're not interested in cleaning up. And I keep telling them, we are, we are, people are doing things, it's not always as vis-

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Editor's Note: Following are the results of the recent PRV Survey conducted by the Penn State Department of Veterinary Science.

	Number	Percent
Q-1 Have you acquired replacement gilts in the last six months?		
1 NO, I RAISE ALL OF MY REPLACEMENT GILTS	89	23.5%
2 NO, BUT I DO ACQUIRE REPLACEMENT GILTS	46	12.2%
3 YES	119	31.5%
4 OTHER	81	21.4%
Blank	43	11.4%
IF YES, how many have you acquired in the last six months?		
1 1 - 10 GILTS	34	9.0%
2 11 - 20 GILTS	28	7.4%
3 MORE THAN 20 GILTS	59	15.6%
4 NOT SURE	1	3%
Blank	256	67.7%
Q-2 Are acquired replacement gilts tested for pseudorabies?		
1 I DO NOT ACQUIRE REPLACEMENT GILTS	73	19.3%
2 NO GILTS TESTED	32	8.5%
3 ALL GILTS TESTED	90	23.8%
4 SOME GILTS TESTED	26	6.9%
5 NOT SURE	15	4.0%
6 OTHER	32	8.5%
Blank	110	29.1%

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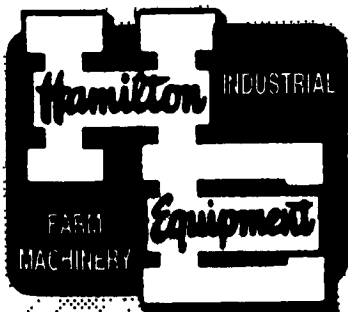
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