

# Producers Should Make Community-Wide Effort

(Continued from Page A35)

Using the new vaccine became even easier recently when the USDA, the Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council (PPPC), and Penn State teamed up in an effort to secure USDA funding through a project aimed to study a PRV vaccine and its effects on moving the pigs to market sooner with better results. This is a "backdoor" effort to get funding for the vaccine, according to Abe Fisher, president of PPPC and chair of the eradication effort, because the USDA will not fund vaccine efforts anymore.

Because winter approaches (prime time for spread of the virus in herds), producers are urged to sign up for the program. *Lancaster Farming* has enclosed the form with this article. The program will cost producers only 35 percent of the total cost of the vaccine, according to Dr. Paul M. Pitcher, APHIS field veterinarian. The rest is funded by USDA and a good deal comes from the PPPC, from the "unrestricted fund" (a total of about \$25,000 from PPPC for this effort, according to Fisher).

"This is really a community effort to work this winter in cleaning up pseudorabies," said Fisher. He said the council seeks to "keep everybody together" on the eradication effort. A concern of the council is those neighbors "who have done nothing" to work together to clean up the virus.

Fisher spoke about Mercer, a county in Ohio, similar to Lancaster, that had a huge PRV problem. The USDA went into the county to vaccinate all the herds. Because of the vaccine, in two years, the 70-80 herds infected with the virus were reduced to only seven infected. "It will work," said Fisher.

Dr. Amy Nesselrodt, APHIS veterinarian, said that there are 122 quarantined herds in Stage II of the eradication effort in the state now. Herd plans are currently voluntary, but may soon become required if the state wants to stay in Stage II by next fall. The vast majority of the affected herds, she said, are

under a herd plan (about 78 percent), with 15 percent still pending and another 8 percent undecided or with some type of agreement. This year, 16 new herds were picked up under circle testing. She said that Stage III in Pennsylvania should take effect in late 1995 or early 1996.

"We need to get together," said PPPC President Abe Fisher. "We need to start on the same page and hopefully this project will do that."

Fisher said that western Pennsylvania, unable to sell hogs to Ohio and other places because Ohio is in Stage III and Pennsylvania is still in Stage II, can be accorded Stage III status if Pennsylvania moves to adopt a split-state status. Under this status, counties including Potter, Clinton, Centre, Mifflin, Huntingdon, and Bedford and west would be placed under Stage III, and the eastern part of Pennsylvania would remain under Stage II until only the designated one percent or less of the total herds are quarantined for the virus.

Other states could move to Stage III and beyond, which would isolate markets for Pennsylvania producers. Already, Ohio, Delaware, West Virginia, and parts of North Carolina and Indiana are at Stage III and won't buy Pennsylvania hogs. New York is at Stage V. Other states could force Pennsylvania to going to extreme measures, such as depopulation, if producers don't come on line with a control program.

"Some people think pseudorabies is going to go away," said Fisher. "That is not true. The U.S. is going to clean up pseudorabies, and those people who didn't come here tonight that think this thing is going to fall flat on its face... are going to be sadly mistaken."

"The Pork Producers are firmly behind this project," he said. "We hope that we can get 100 percent participation, because I think it is time for a community effort to go after it."



Two or three years ago, "If somebody would have asked me about (pseudorabies), I would have said, it's a political disease, just live with it," said Dave Heckel, Farm Crest Feeds, far right. Heckel said the success that his company's grower-finishing herds have had with the gene-deleted vaccine has proven that the problem can be cleaned up. Heckel spoke on a producer panel with Ray Martin, center, a hog producer from Voganville. Both herd managers spoke about their problems after testing pseudorabies virus (PRV)-positive in the past. Ken Kephart, Penn State swine specialist, far left, was panel moderator.

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