

**A MILESTONE FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY AND THE POULTRY INDUSTRY**

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently approved a new vaccine for use by the poultry industry that is a "first" in many ways.

It is a single live vaccine that protects birds against two common diseases: Newcastle disease, a highly contagious respiratory illness that is often fatal, and fowlpox, a relatively slow-spreading viral disease that can reduce growth and productivity.

The vaccine is unique in that it was produced through recombinant DNA technology by a process

in which a foreign gene from one virus is added to the genome of another to construct a single vaccine that can confer immunity against two diseases. This process of foreign gene addition produces a Category III type of virus, and the new poultry vaccine is the first such type to be commercialized in the U.S.

Syntro, of Kansas City, Kan., in a joint development venture with the Japanese chemical company Nippon Zeon, is the first company licensed to produce a USDA Category III vaccine. The live vaccine, to be marketed under the name "VectorVax FP-N," is expected to capture a large portion of the U.S. and worldwide markets for vaccines against these diseases.

Development of the vaccine involved first deleting the disease-causing gene of the fowlpox virus, while leaving intact other genes that control the expression of proteins that elicit a protective

immune response in the host.

This modified genome of the fowlpox virus was then further customized by adding two genes from the Newcastle disease virus that control the expression of proteins that trigger an immune response to Newcastle disease. The final, specially engineered live virus, a product of recombinant genetic material (DNA) from two separate viral sources, is predicted to be free of adverse side effects that are often associated with live vaccines, while providing immunity to these two diseases for up to six weeks. This will reduce the number of vaccinations required for a flock, and is predicted to save producers significantly in costs associated with multiple vaccination programs.



**Ag Program Grants**

**CHARLOTTE HALL, Md.** — A demonstration program has been established to help Southern Maryland farmers learn more about alternative agriculture enterprises that may be feasible in this region. The program's goal is to assist farmers by providing "seed money" for on-farm demonstrations and applied research projects and to determine the feasibility and profitmaking potential of new agricultural enterprises.

Any farmer or cooperative extension service agent/specialist within the southern Maryland region is eligible to submit a proposal for consideration. Alternative agriculture project areas include aquaculture, field crops, floriculture, forestry, horticulture, livestock, turf production, seminars, networking groups, and marketing or feasibility studies.

Grant requests may be made to help fund any alternative agriculture project including research trials, demonstration plots, farm field

days, informational workshops or meetings, surveys, etc. Grant funds may be used to pay for any supplies and/or hired labor needed to perform and complete the proposed project. Grant funds may not be used for reimbursement of the project leader's own labor, land and/or equipment or for making capital improvements.

Grant requests should be between \$500 and \$1000. Requests for more than \$1,000 will be considered based on the merits of the proposal and the availability of funds. The application deadline for the first round of proposals is January 13. The deadline for the second round is April 3.

Preliminary interest has been strong, therefore, it is recommended that proposals be submitted as early as possible. To receive a copy of the grant application or for additional information about this program, contact Candy Walter, agricultural specialist, at (301) 884-2144 or 870-2520.

**Co-Op Pays Dividend**

**TOWANDA** (Bradford Co.) — Scenic Mountain Milk Producers Cooperative has declared a patronage dividend for 1994. Dairy farmer members received their dividend checks at a recent meeting of the cooperative in Towanda.

R. LaVerne McCarty of Forksville, business manager of the cooperative, said the patronage dividend was in addition to the premiums their members have enjoyed this past year. They have a quality market that consistently pays above the Federal order 2 price. He also stated that the cooperative is seeking additional quality producers to supply their market. Any quality producer in northern Sullivan or Bradford counties that may be interested in Scenic Mountain Co-op's program should contact McCarty at R.R. #1, Box 1012, Forksville, PA 18616, 717-924-3963.

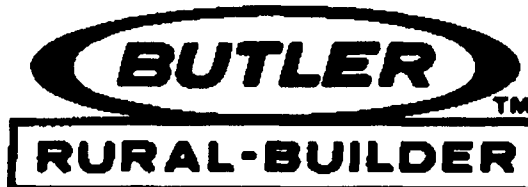
Outstanding quality awards were presented to two Farms. Robert Stoll at Rome, received first place. Duane & Betty Reibson at Forksville received the second place award. James Patsos at United Ag Services, who provided the awards, commended the members of the cooperative for their production of quality milk.

**ANNOUNCING**

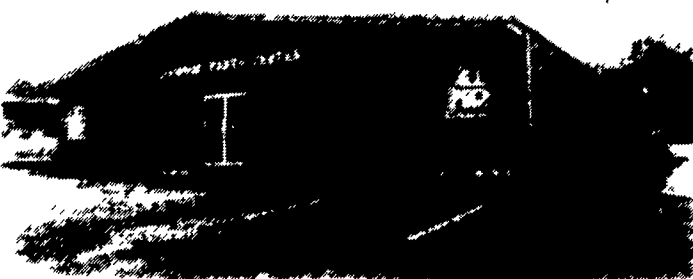
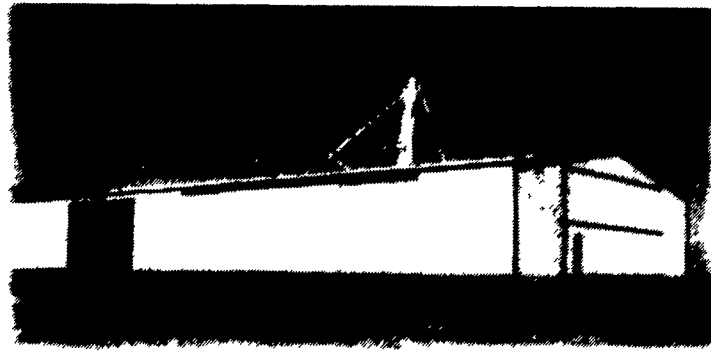
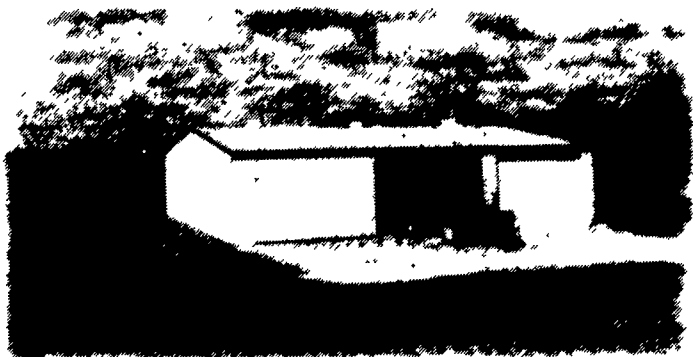
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