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duction problem. Some sows may complete the process of farrowing and simply lose the ability to secrete oxytocin from special tissue at the base of the brain. Because stress can interfere with oxytocin release, the trauma associated with farrowing may prevent the sow from releasing the oxytocin that is present, which means she will not release the milk stored in the alveolar units of her mammary glands.

Many producers have found an injection of oxytocin a day or two after farrowing to be very helpful in establishing milk flow. Once the pigs get a few meals, they are more likely to be more vigorous in massaging the udder to induce the sow to release her own oxytocin. This stress-induced failure to secrete oxytocin can occur in cases where there is no evidence of infection in the sow.

A second potential cause of lactation failure is an insufficient rate of secretion of prolactin due to the presence of an infection in the sow. We know that certain infections (such as mastitis) can cause lactation failure, but we do not often know when these occur, and we do not know how frequently insufficient prolactin secretion is involved.

A third potential cause of lactation failure may be low prolactin secretion in the absence of any infectious agent. Literature shows low serum prolactin in sows which did not produce milk very well, but the cause of this problem is unknown. The trial which we are performing here at Penn State is a collaborative experiment in which we are trying to establish the frequency of different causes of lactation failure in swine herds.

The Penn State Study

With the help of two veterinarians, Robert Graybill (Lancaster) and Peggy Hawkins (Elizabethtown), we are collecting samples from various Pennsylvania farms. Mike Miller, vice president of swine operations at White Oak Mills, has allowed us to work with their sows. The objective of the research is to identify the frequency with which the problems described above occur.

To perform this work, we must identify litters of struggling pigs, obtain blood from the sow within 15 minutes of a nursing episode, and — for comparison purposes — also obtain blood from a healthy herd mate in the same room. We will determine the concentrations of oxytocin, prolactin, and cytokines in the samples collected. The cytokines we will measure are substances released from white blood cells of animals when the body has been

invaded anywhere by a foreign substance. The findings will tell us if, in fact, some infection is present. This information can then be used to design more effective management strategies to both prevent and treat these problems.

We need survey data from large numbers of cases to know the frequencies of the different causes, because the approach to solve the problem will be different, depending on the specific cause of the problem.

Potential Benefits To Producers

What is the value of this work? The first benefit is the ability to wean a larger number of pigs per farrowing group, which can lead to increased sales of feeder pigs or market weight hogs. The second tangible benefit is the dilution of overhead costs associated with weaning a larger number of pigs per sow maintained.

In addition to these economic

HUNTINGDON (Huntingdon Co.) — Phil Rzewnicki and William Hosler of Huntingdon County Extension Office announced that Huntingdon County will be participating in a pilot farm safety

project. Farming continues to be one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States. At least 48 persons in Pennsylvania were killed from farm work accidents during 1993.

The pilot safety project has the support of several major farm organizations and state agricultural leaders including the Pennsylvania State Grange, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, and Pennsylvania Farmers Union.

benefits, lower death losses in the farrowing room will promote an improved public image of the pork producing industry. And any pork producer would be delighted to save more baby pigs.

This research project has already been rewarding. It would not be successful were it not for the extensive cooperation received from Penn State Swine Extension Specialist Ken Kephart, and from Lorraine Sordillo and Larry Hutchinson (Penn State's Department of Veterinary Science). The trial was initiated with funds from the National Pork Producers Council and the Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council. It will be continued with funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

project.

The purpose of this pilot project is to explore methods of farm safety and health education by examining different educational approaches from the summer of 1995 through the fall of 1997. The results of this project are expected to provide direction to those interested in determining how to reduce farm accidents in the future.

Farmers in Huntingdon County will be hearing more about this project over the next few months.

Perdue Grain Purchases Speciality Feed Company

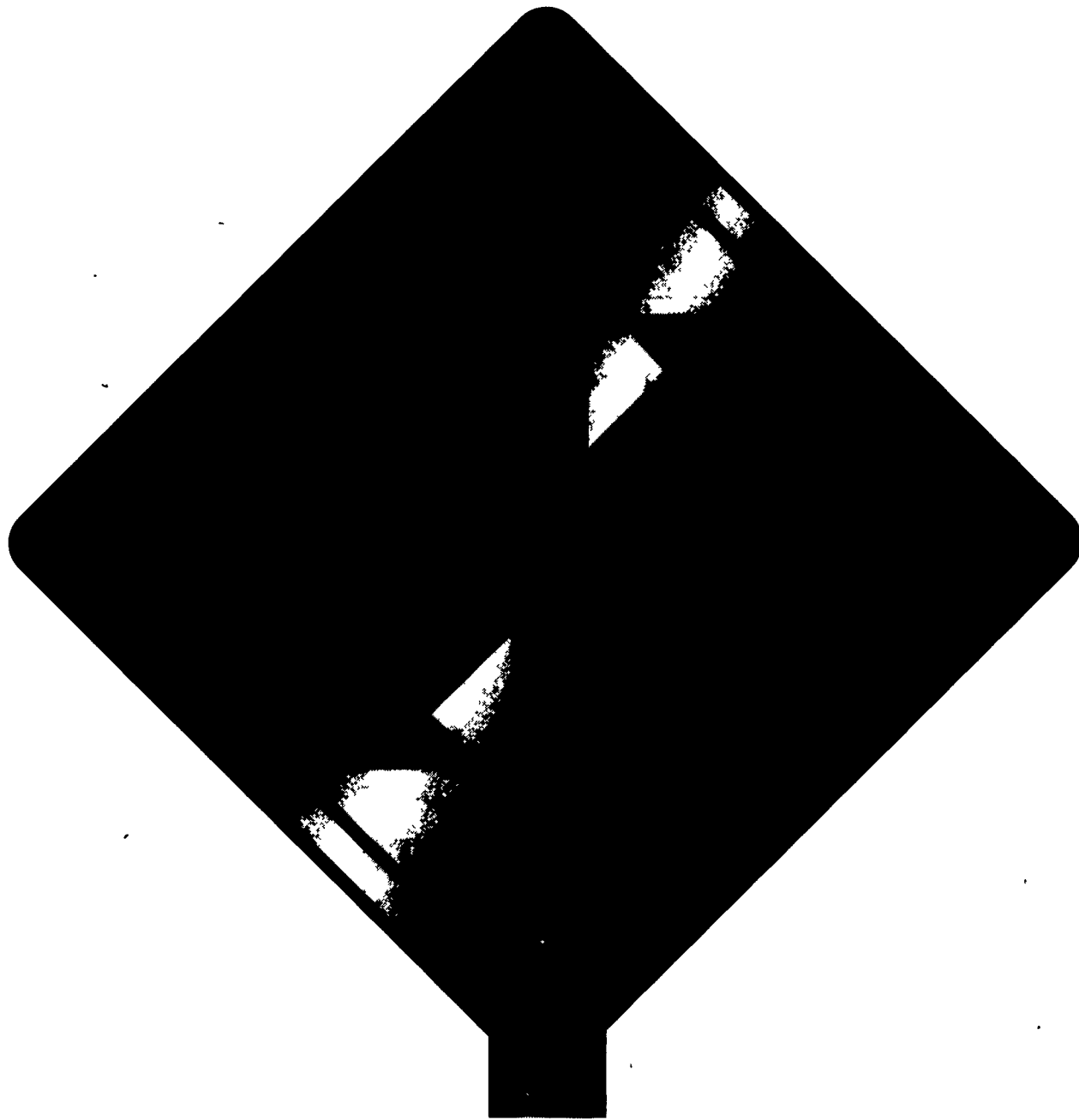
SALISBURY, Md.—Perdue Farms has expanded its animal feed business by purchasing the assets of A.J. Balshi Inc. of Catawissa, Pa. At the same time, Perdue announced formation of a new operating company, Perdue Specialty Feeds Inc., within its grain division.

Financial details of the acquisition were not disclosed. Operations will continue without interruption.

Perdue Specialty Feeds Inc.

will manufacture and sell quality aquaculture feed for commercial use. "This new business will enhance our position in trading and production of feed ingredients to serve diverse agribusiness customers," said Dick Willey, vice president and general manager of the Perdue grain and oilseed division. The division operations include several other non-poultry businesses, including an edible oil refinery.

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