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UPDATE: AVIAN INFLUENZA IN MEXICO!

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Avian Influenza (AI) is caused by a virus. Even though it is similar to the human influenza virus, AI only infects the avian species.

Poultry producers learned more about avian influenza than many wanted to know in the 1983-1985 outbreak of AI in Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Recently, highly pathogenic forms of AI have been isolated from flocks located over quite a large area in central Mexico. The disease has been affecting flocks in the Mexican states of Puebla, Jalisco, and Queretaro.

The disease has not entered into the U.S. However, the risk of its entry is great because of the many exchanges of workers between the U.S. and Mexico. Further, the path taken by many migrating waterfowl and other wild birds, which are known carriers of AI, leads from central Mexico through many poultry producing states in the U.S. Therefore, the possibility of workers and others tracking the disease while traveling between the two areas is a major concern.

The disease that is causing high mortality and egg production losses in Mexico started as a low pathogenic (low mortality) strain of H5N2 and then mutated to a highly pathogenic (high mortality) disease epidemic, and in that sense is very similar to the 1983 situation

in Pennsylvania. Another isolation of a different strain of AI virus (H7N2) has been found in Utah, which is not thought to be related to the current outbreak in Mexico.

The Utah outbreak is in turkey flocks and is considered to be stabilized and under control through isolation and vaccination of flocks in the immediate vicinity of the infected flocks. Utah has many range flocks of turkeys and the disease was thought to have entered by migrating waterfowl that fed and watered with domestic turkeys.

Periodically, other isolations of low pathogenic AI have been isolated from birds in the live bird markets in New York, New Jersey, Baltimore, and Philadelphia.

Disease does not respect people or locations. It can cause a problem in your flock if you are not completely aware of the proper biosecurity and management practices.

Some of the clinical signs of AI found in commercial poultry are marked depression, ruffled feathers, decreased feed consumption, decreased egg production, watery diarrhea, and respiratory distress. In high pathogenic AI cases, high mortality as well as cheesy exudate

in the sinuses of turkeys and swellings of the head and neck of chickens are other diagnostic lesions.

Because these same lesions are typical of other diseases, serological tests and virus isolations are the main ways of obtaining an accurate diagnosis of the disease. Currently, most commercial poultry companies participate in an AI surveillance program that samples eggs and blood from commercial flocks. The surveillance programs are to detect AI in our commercial flocks. It does not prevent AI, but if isolated it can be typed for potential pathogenicity.

It will also help with determining the extent of spread among flocks. Delays in the detection of many types of AI that may not be showing symptoms or lesions can allow time for mutations and the risk of a more serious disease threat. This is what happened in Pennsylvania in 1983-1984 and is happening in Mexico.

If you have any questions about the health status of your flock, contact your service representative or qualified poultry health official, or have birds submitted directly to one of the three Pennsylvania diagnostic laboratories.

Again, it is important to remember that the major routes of infection for AI are from migratory waterfowl and wild seabirds. Waterfowl have been shown to carry the disease and can infect ponds or other water sources where the virus will remain viable for extended periods of time. The virus can then be spread by

humans, domestic poultry, or anything that comes in contact with the feces or contaminated water and then comes in contact with commercial poultry.

The prevalence of ponds and migrating waterfowl in an area near commercial poultry facilities represents an increased risk that must be countered with increased vigilance and sanitation requirements. Poultry managers must maintain strict biosecurity and keep visitors or animals away from your buildings, especially if they might have come in contact with ponds, standing water, or migratory waterfowl.

Educate employees to stay away from live-bird markets and flea markets that may sell poultry. If you sell birds to the live market, make sure the sanitation of trucks and coops are maintained at a high standard.

Moving birds to coops at a loca-

tion off the farm instead of allowing trucks and coops into your facilities where other birds are housed is recommended. Cleanup after load-out is completed is essential to prevent the possibility of disease spreading to other flocks.

Employees should also be questioned and told of the potential risk and problems associated with waterfowl and the current disease outbreak in Mexico. Because the virus is maintained and carried by waterfowl, the likelihood of eradicating the disease is not reasonable.

However, it is possible to eradicate the disease from your premises. If you do not make efforts to prevent the disease from entering your flocks, the expense of destroying birds, cleanup, downtime, as well as isolation from other friends and family who have poultry flocks is the risk you take. Don't gamble with AI.



Maryland DHIA Report For April

(Continued from Page C8)

Queen Annes County

Herd Name	Breed	Cows In	Milk Avg
		Herd T	FCM T
Benjamin Stanton		H 46	83.7
Pintail Point Farm		H 75	77.2
Charles R Patterson		H 107	75.9

Donald W Skinner	H 98	75.1
Boone Brothers	H 137	73.9
LJ & WE Palmatary	H 177	73.9
F&J Moore	H 129	72.2
McFarland Donnie & Wayne	H 146	68.0
Harry L Schrader & Sons	H 182	66.0

Talbot County

Herd Name	Breed	Cows In	Milk Avg
		Herd T	FCM T
Wm Brinsfield		H 49	74.8
Willis & Henry Snow		H 46	70.7

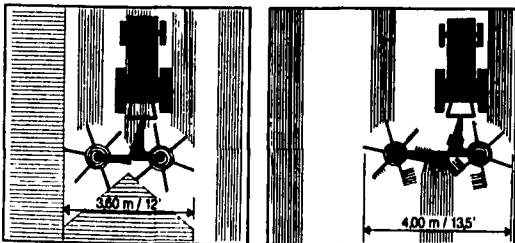
Washington County

Herd Name	Breed	Cows In	Milk Avg
		Herd T	FCM T
Curtis W Ausherman		H 163	80.6
Roy J Byers		H 29	77.1
Arthur Rhoderick		H 227	76.4
Raymond D Divelbiss Jr		H 88	75.7
E Andrew Stone		H 183	74.6
Futurland Farm		H 148	72.0
Creek Bound Farm		H 109	71.5
Marvin L Zimmerman		H 156	71.1
Pryor Brothers		H 87	70.4
Debaugh Farms		H 99	68.9
Magna-Vista Farm		H 59	67.7
Craig & Brenda Leggett		H 92	67.6
Baker Farms		H 128	67.3
Ralph W Shank		H 84	66.8

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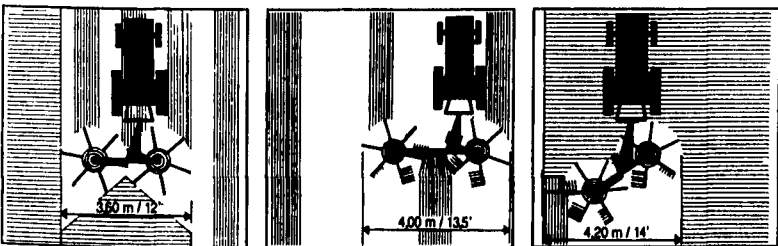
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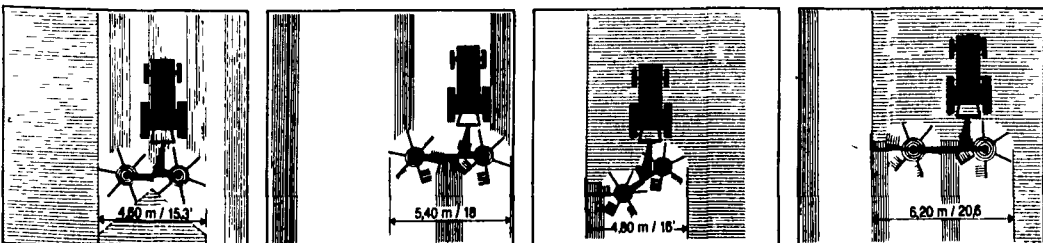
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