

Neighbor Relations Help Protect Producers From Lawsuits

(Continued from Page A25)

and bend over backward," said Andrews. That means opening up your farm to neighbors for tours, sitting in on township meetings, and allowing the township to become involved in the decision-making on the farm. Make sure your operation is environmentally sound and you are doing your best to control farm odors — and advertise these facts whenever possible.

Don't, as Andrews suggested, sit there and offer excuses when something has gone wrong. He has heard them all, including:

- From a Wisconsin pork producer: "I don't know what came over me." The producer asked that the fine be retracted for pumping manure slurry from a pit into a stream.

- "It was my employees' fault." A producer spoke about the difficulties of communicating to his non-English speaking employees. There is no legal excuse for this.

- "It was the inspector's fault."

It is up to the landowner to ensure the facility is built correctly and works according to plan.

- Other excuses have included "It was the weather's fault, it was too cold"; "It was the weather's fault, too wet, and I just can't get enough cost-share"; "The weeds were too high"; and even "It must have been the pigs' fault."

All these are no excuse.

The solution? Develop good community relations. Do "anything to foster goodwill," said Andrews.

While fighting the nuisance suits can be costly — and winning even costlier — there is often no telling exactly how a jury will decide, no matter what the evidence.

The important elements include an appropriate location for the facility, monitor the facility, maintain good neighbor relations even in areas unrelated to the livestock operations (such as give out pork to the community), keep the operation as neat as you can and shield it from view as much as possible

(make your farm a "showplace," said Andrews), know your rights, and let others know them. Respond appropriately to complaints and do "not appear to be hard-nosed and profit-driven."

If a situation arises, according to Andrews, investigate it completely, keep careful records, gather witnesses to substantiate records, develop an emergency response plan, suggest mediation, take the lawsuit seriously, and defend yourself vigorously.

Andrews said producers can contact him toll-free at (800) 705-6270 if they have concerns.

At the meeting, Brent Hershey, LanChester Council vice presi-

dent, provided a pseudorabies update. As of last week, said Hershey, there were 48 known infected herds in the state. Thirty-one of them will test off in 1996. That means that only 16-18 infected herds will exist at the end of 1996.

As of now, 10 herds do not have herd cleanup plans in place.

Producers need to start the certification Level III process now and others should be recertified. Dr. Robert Graybill and Dr. Tim Trayer were at the meeting to conduct quality assurance seminars for producers. Producers were told to look at their producing facilities from the point of view of correct label vaccination and biosecurity

program "packages," said Graybill, and to establish a plan that is best for the farm.

Kurt Good, LanChester Council president, said that the local organization attended the Food and Fun Fest in Ephrata this year with the state pork council. The state board has been working on promotional leaflets with packers to be distributed in supermarkets.

Also, three directors were elected to serve three-year terms on the LanChester Council. They are Scott Bailey, farrow unit manager, Reinholds; Nelson Beam, farrow-to-finish producer in Elverston; and Kurt Good, Good's Buying Station, Denver.

Holstein Young Breeder Applications Due

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Applications are due by Jan. 15 for the Pennsylvania Holstein Association Distinguished Young Breeder Award.

The application forms are available from the PHA by calling (814) 234-0364, fax (814) 234-1698, or by writing to Pennsylvania Hols-

tein Association, 839 Benner Pike, State College, PA, 16801.

The young breeder award program seeks to honor outstanding accomplishments in breeding Holsteins done by state and National Holstein Association members aged 21 to 40 years old.

For the current round of applica-

tions, the age cutoff is Dec. 31, 1995 — those 40 on Dec. 31 are still eligible; those age 21 by that date are eligible.

Applicants must own and manage a Holstein dairy herd and the award is available to an individual or couple with ownership/management responsibilities for a registered Holstein herd.

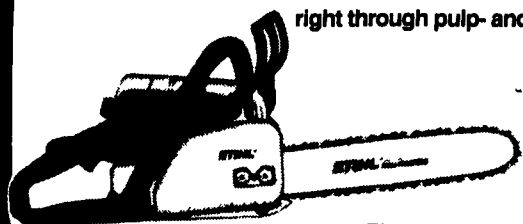
Award winners are to be recognized at the 1996 state convention in Williamsport, Feb. 22-24.

The Pennsylvania winner will have their application forwarded for inclusion in the national competition.

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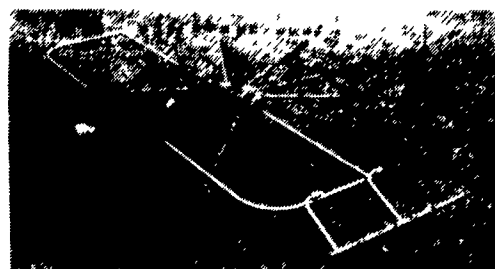
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