

Media Handling Of SE Facts

(Continued from Page A1)
 programs in the country, to Stone Phillips, anchorperson of the nightly NBC TV show. Nobody at NBC "Dateline" responded.

The segment, which aired Tuesday night on "Dateline," may have put some fears about eating eggs in the minds of many. According to Bushway, one claim made was that one in 40 people were exposed to SE in eggs — figures that Bushway and others believe are largely inflated.

Bushway was able to appear on a brief segment of the Lancaster County affiliate, WGAL TV 8, earlier in the day on Tuesday, to respond beforehand to the Dateline segment. She indicated that eggs, if handled and cooked properly, are perfectly safe, and that getting sick from eating eggs "is pretty rare." Actual figures put SE in about two eggs in 10,000 from contaminated farms, which is far less of a risk than many media organizations reveal.

Producers can benefit from some of the work the coalition does full-time to communicate with the media and spread the truth about SE. Memberships stretch across seven states in the Northeast, including Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Delaware, New



Dr. Richard L. Dutton

Jersey, Massachusetts, and Maine, according to Bushway.

The coalition, formed four years ago, was started to "respond to the kinds of things we saw" as a result of the Dateline segment and similar stories. The coalition receives cooperative funding from the American Egg Board to place radio, TV, and print advertising about the value of eggs.

More and more, the coalition is turning to radio as an effective, tried-and-true way to reach people.

"Radio is a huge media market today, an important media market," said Bushway. People turn to radio because more have time to listen to it, with increased drive time to work. Also, the coalition can negotiate more with radio stations to maximize the use of money allowable.

Last Christmas, the coalition helped put together a 60-second radio spot, "Dreaming of An Egg White Christmas!" Close to 3,000 people in the Northeast heard the radio spot and asked for the brochure of nine holiday recipes that use egg whites. The recipe brochure is available from the Northeast Egg Promotion Coalition, P.O. Box 508, Hampton, NH 03843. Last year, the coalition ran 698 spots in mostly localized

markets, said Bushway. This year they've requested 575 spots on radio to appeal to women, the primary egg buyer in most households.

However, "almost 50 percent of the people who wrote in were men," she said, responding to the "cholesterol message." Regarding how to combat SE, a noted flock health veterinarian from the Midwest spoke to egg producers during the morning portion of Wednesday's program.

Dr. Richard L. Dutton, flock health veterinarian for M.G.

Waldbaum Company, Wakefield, Neb., spoke about his company's firsthand experience with SE and offered suggestions on how to combat it through management.

Dutton manages flock health for 13 million layers and six million pullets for the company in Wakefield, home to about 1,100 people.

In the past few years, Waldbaum has decreased the numbers of birds under contract. Six years ago, there were more than 100

farms under independent contract, with a total of two million birds. Now, about 300,000 are under independent contract.

As for SE testing, the Northeast and California are the most active in programs, according to Dutton. California tests about 70 percent of their flocks for SE, compared to maybe 15-25 percent in the Midwest and less than 10 percent in the South.

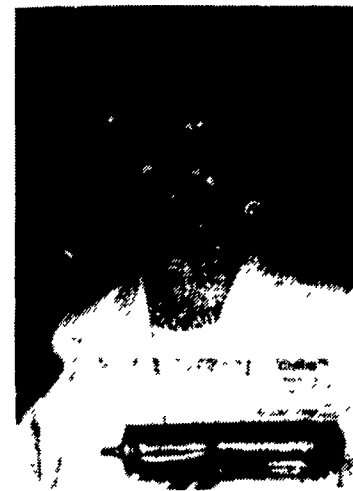
"From a practitioner's point of view, SE is a pain," Dutton told those who attended the show. Some view SE as a political problem, some a breeder problem, others a rodent problem. But food safety issues are with producers today, "whether we like it or not," he said.

"Too many people stick their head in the sand and ignore the problem," he said. However, Waldbaum, because of an experience with SE in homemade ice cream, was able to quickly isolate the problem (with two of their own layer houses in Colorado) and deal with it.

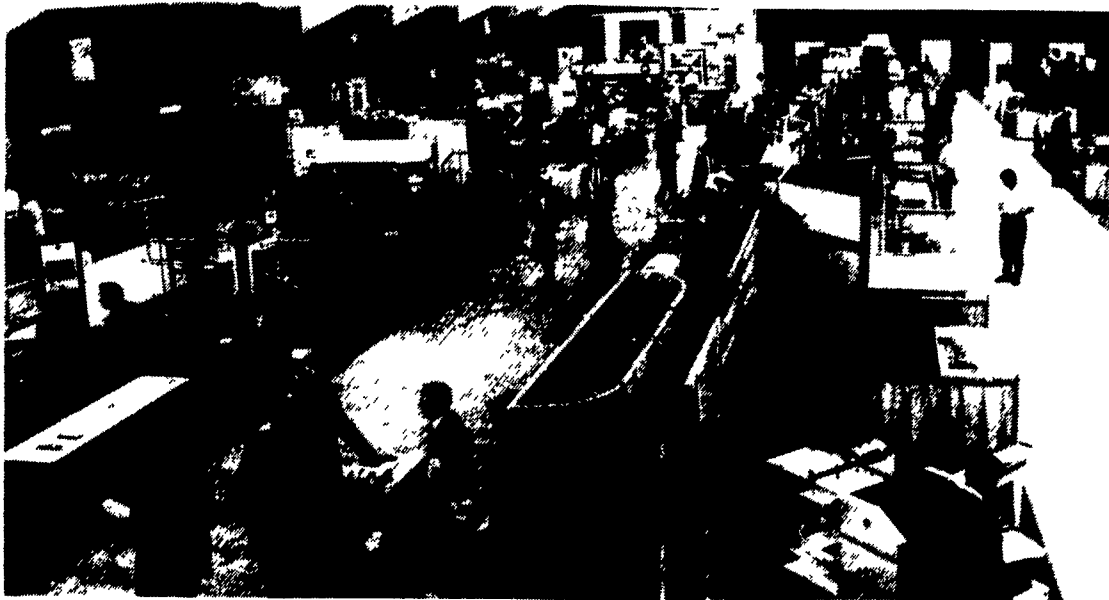
As a result, they have learned a great deal about how to check for SE and stop it. The important elements are to check the overall bird health environment, check the manure belts for SE, stop rodents, and perform proper cleaning and disinfection.

Whatever the cause of SE, said Dutton, "you can't be a pansy — you have to really go after the problem." At the show's Monday conference, 10-minute presentations were given on a host of poultry health issues. On Thursday, competitive exclusion and Salmonella was the spotlight, along with the view on exports.

About 150 producers and agri-industry representatives were registered on Wednesday's programs, and hundreds of producers enjoyed a free boxed lunch, courtesy of the Pennsylvania Poultry Federation, which sponsored the two-day event.



Christine Bushway



Hundreds visited the exhibit hall on Tuesday and Wednesday this week at the annual Northeast Poultry Show.

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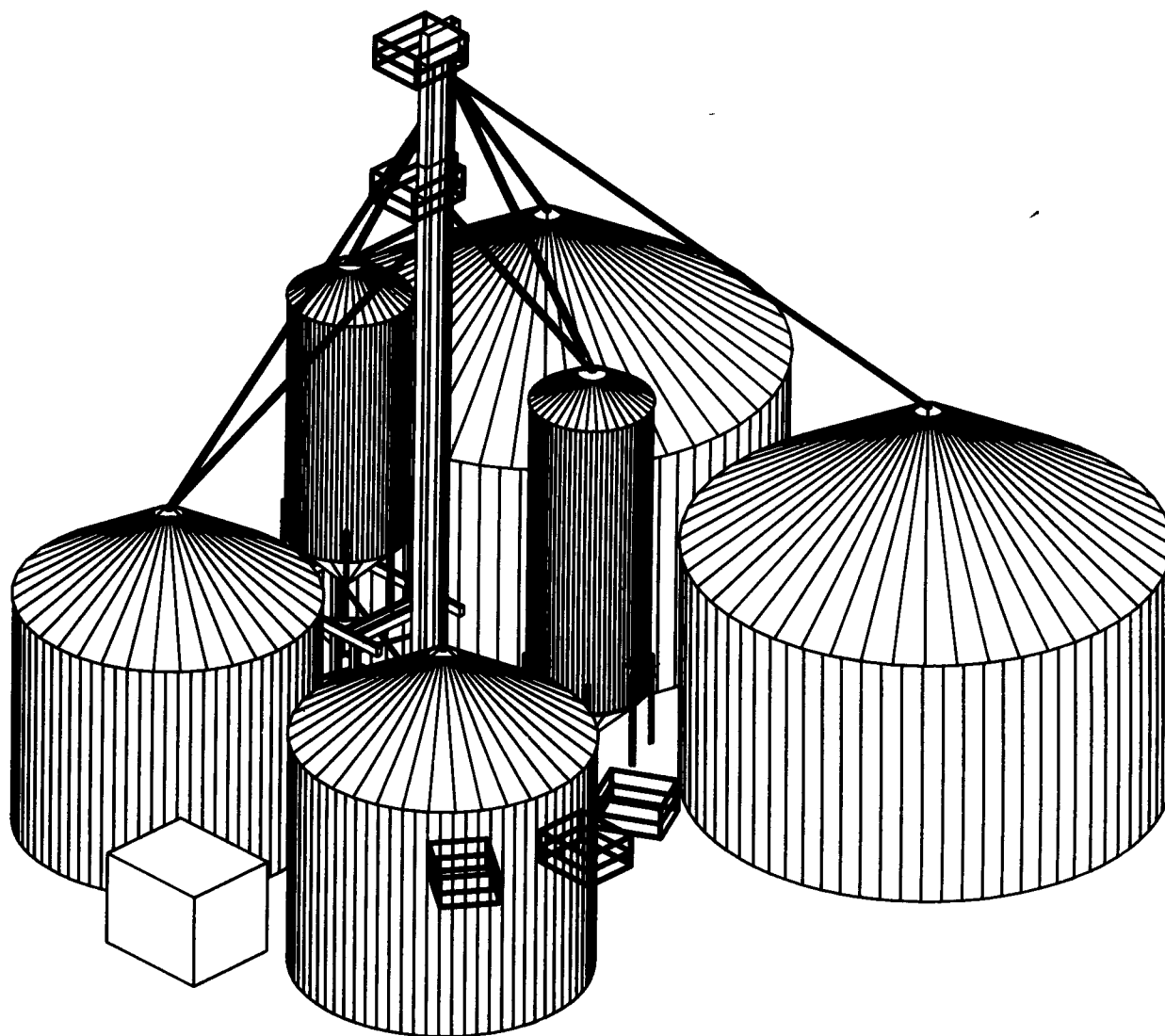
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