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POULTRY SCIENCE • CAPITAL REGION • VETERINARY SCIENCE
FOOD SCIENCE • AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS • AGRICULTURAL
& BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING • ENTOMOLOGYCHICKEN BONES
AND ARTHRITIS IIDr. Roland M. Leach, Jr.
Dept. Of
Poultry Science

Because our research program focuses on cartilage metabolism, I have been receiving numerous phone calls and letters about a best-selling book entitled "The Arthritis Cure: The Medical Miracle That Can Halt, Reverse, And May Even Cure Osteoarthritis." Dr. Theodosakis, the author of this book, has benefited from considerable publicity through appearances on the "Today Show" and reviews in The New York Times, Time Magazine, U. S. News and World Report, and other news media.

Before we deal with the miracle cure, lets review the basics of arthritis.

This disease is the inflammation and destruction of the cartilage in our joints which can be painful and debilitating. Cartilage is composed of cells (chondrocytes) surrounded by collagen (a fibrous protein) and chondroitin sulfate (a polysaccharide). In arthritis, the collagen and chondroitin sulfate are being destroyed faster than the chondrocytes can replace them.

There are two types of arthritis: osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis is due to physical damage or wear and tear which leads to cartilage degeneration and destruction. On the other

hand, rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease in which the immune cells of the body think that the bodys cartilage is a foreign substance and tries to destroy it. The latter type of arthritis was the focus of a previous article I had written in response to a report that eating collagen extracted from chicken bones partially alleviated the symptoms of this disease. I also pointed out that there was some scientific rationale to support this observation.

In my opinion, there is less scientific credibility in Dr. Theodosakis cure for osteoarthritis. The most publicized aspect of this cure is the oral consumption of a supplement containing chondroitin sulfate and glucosamine, a sugar building block of chondroitin sulfate. These substances are extracted from crustacean shells and animal cartilage (including chicken bones). The oral consumption of this supplement would result in the complete digestion of these materials in our digestive tracts. Thus, there is little likelihood that these substances would appear intact in the blood stream so they could directly affect cartilage metabolism.

Two European clinical trials are cited as providing evidence for the efficacy of the chondroitin sulfate treatment. However, in both of these trials, the substances (chondroitin sulfate or glucosamine) were injected into the body, thereby bypassing exposure to the digestive system. Most of the other

support for the use of the supplement is anecdotal. For example, these products have been available for treating aging arthritic dogs for some time. So when a prominent newspaper columnist reported she showed some improvement in her arthritis when she snatched some of Fido's medicine, she provided additional publicity for the use of the chondroitin sulfate supplement.

While the chondroitin sulfate

aspects of Dr. Theodosakis recommendations have received most of the press, other components of his regimen are generally accepted as valid approaches to living with arthritis. These include eating a balanced diet, exercising, and reducing both weight and stress. Although acknowledging the importance of the latter recommendations, many recognized authorities, as well as the Arthritis Foundation, are cautious when dis-

cussing the potential benefits of the supplements.

Clearly, the latest book on osteoarthritis has stirred considerable controversy and has sparked the initiation of additional clinical trials to test the efficacy of these supplements for people suffering with the disease.

Who knows? When the results of these tests are available, we may have another reason to use chicken bones for the treatment of arthritis.

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Adams Farm Bureau Makes Goal

GETTYSBURG (Adams Co.) — The Adams County Farm Bureau (ACFB) reached a record family membership of 913, according to an announcement made by acting membership chairperson, Joel Waybright, Gettysburg. This figure established a record in number of members.

"We surpassed the goal of 913 and made gain," Waybright reported. "The membership year began formally in September 1996 with a mail campaign, followed by a farmer-to-farmer membership procurement program. Kickoff was held in December; we had hoped to reach goal by Rally Day in February. Due to the dedication and commitment by the membership committee leaders, captains and workers, we were able to reach our target prior to the closing of the year."

Acting membership chairperson, Joel Waybright, has held this position for five years and hopes to pass it along to another fully qualified individual from the organization for the 1997-1998 membership fiscal year. "Joel

always maintained and followed through with his responsibilities as chairperson; his credibility with the membership can only be outweighed by his thoroughness and detailed insistence that all constituents of the farming community be contacted for membership within the organization," said President Ed Wilkinson of the ACFB.

"Membership is the lifeblood of the organization; without membership, PFB would not exist," said President Guy Donaldson of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. "It was the goal of the committee to contact every farm family in the county for membership in the local bureau. With Waybright's assistance, we not only reached that goal, but indeed surpassed it."

Waybright will be honored for attaining goal at the PFB annual convention in November and at the annual summer picnic of the ACFB in August. A victory party may be scheduled to recognize the workers for all their efforts.

For more information, contact any board member or President Ed Wilkinson, (717) 677-4477.

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