

Help To Control Johne's Disease

(Continued from Page A34)
 est degree of certainty.
 If the herd owner receives all negative test results on the 30 free ELISA tests, then they may already qualify for level one certification.

"Herd owners can choose to move up the ladder by doing additional testing," said Hutchinson. "Or they can stay at level one year after year by testing 30 animals randomly each year."

According to Hutchinson, some commercial herds are choosing to pursue only level one certification. "It is a very cheap and low effort way to assure others that your herd does not have a widespread Johne's problem."

Herds that are selling breeding stock will want to go on to level two, three, and four. "Level one does not provide the high degree of confidence that those who market breeding stock need," said Hutchinson.

It takes a herd about four years to receive level four certification using an approved sequence of annual blood tests or manure culture tests. All mature cows in the herd must have both blood tests and fecal samples taken a minimal of four consecutive times.

"This gives anyone buying animals the added assurance that the herd is Johne's free," said Hutchinson.

The third program that PDA offers is the "Johne's Disease Management Program." This program is for herds that have positive results from the "30 Free" tests taken on the herd.

"These herds need to identify how much Johne's they have in their herd and how they are going to manage it," said Hutchinson. "This involves some testing and some management changes."

The first step in the Johne's Disease Management Program is to sign a cooperative agreement. The agreement is signed by the herd owner, herd veterinarian, and PDA to identify what the herd is going to do to control and hopefully eradicate the Johne's problem.

In the agreement, each party agrees to their responsibilities in correcting the problem. PDA agrees to do certain testing and alleviate some of the fees. The veterinarian agrees to do fecal samples and blood tests to monitor the problem. And the herd owner agrees to make necessary changes to control the problem.

These management changes may include the handling of

calves that are very susceptible to the diseases, building new facilities, improving sanitation practices, and separating the different age groups so that young calves are not housed with adult animals.

"The Johne's Disease Management Program is very flexible," said Hutchinson. "Not every herd is going to want to manage the disease as intensively as others do. Also, not all herds will have the same level of disease in their herd."

Once the agreement is signed, the next step is fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in the agreement. The herd owner and veterinarian, along with PDA, must work closely together to control and manage Johne's in the herd.

Herds that participated in either the Johne's Disease Management Program or the Voluntary Johne's Disease Status Program can receive the "30 Free" tests the following year.

According to Hutchinson, educational programs on Johne's have been sponsored at several county meetings over the past few months. However, the best thing that farmers can do to enroll in the program and begin Johne's prevention in their herd is to start by contacting their local veterinarian.

Dairy Farmers Seek Increase In Over-Order Premium

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — With rising diesel fuel prices and milk prices at a 20-year low, dairy farmer groups are seeking a temporary increase of 25 cents per hundredweight to the over-order premium paid to farmers.

The Pennsylvania State Grange and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau are both calling for this increase to aid farmers in light of the financial hardships that hit dairy farmers particularly hard in the early part of this year.

The Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board held a hearing on Thursday to consider whether to temporarily boost wholesale and/or the premium for milk to account for these higher fuel costs.

In a letter submitted as part of the Grange's request for an emergency hearing, the Grange's Legislative Director Brenda Shambaugh said "A number of our members have stated that their fuel costs nearly doubled in recent months. That means that the depressed milk

check is even less able to meet the cost of production."

"These are truly desperate times for dairy farmers," said Harold Curtis, who is Chairman of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's dairy committee and milks 300 cows in Warren County.

According to Curtis, the average cost of production last year was \$13.33 per hundredweight. However, producer payments are expected to average between \$11.50 and \$12.00 per hundredweight for the month of January.

At \$12.00 per hundredweight, a 25-cent increase to \$1.45 in the over-order premium would bring the farmer's Class I milk price up to \$13.45, enough to cover production cost.

"Commodity prices are the lowest that they have been in 20 years, and costs are not only rising, but escalating dramatically," said Shambaugh. "Dairy farmers do not have the ability to recoup these additional costs."

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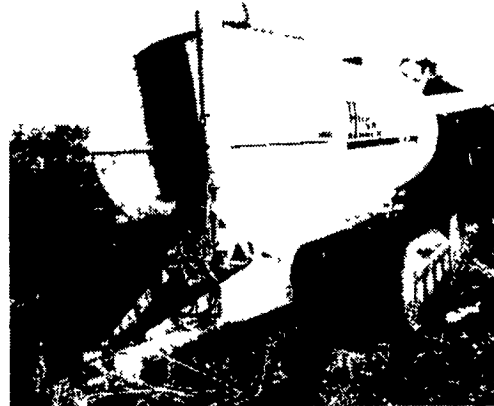
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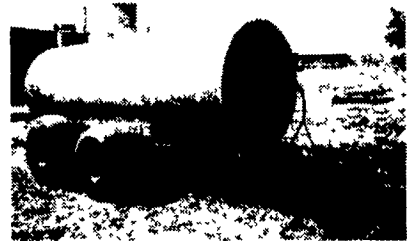
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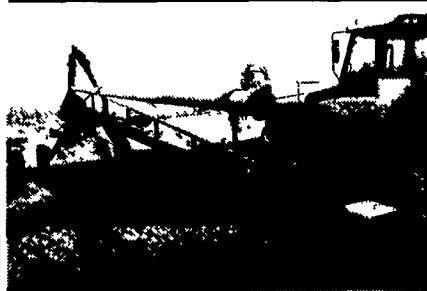
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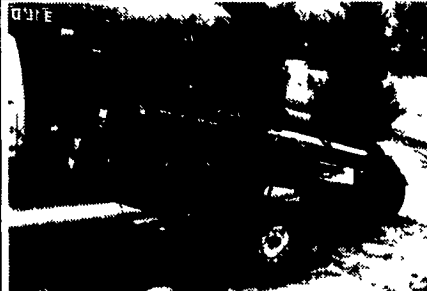
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