BUSINESS ❖ NEWS

Mid-Atlantic Agri Systems Wins Honor

SEATTLE, Wash. — At the annual meeting of J. Houle and Sons, manufacturers of liquid manure equipment, Mid-Atlantic Agri Systems, Quarryville, Pa., received the top volume dealer award for North America.

Shown presenting the award for high scales to Scott Bristou of Mid-Atlantic is Michel Houle, president of J. Houle and Sons.

Houle maintains a network of more than 150 dealers in Canada and the U.S. J. Houle and Sons manufacturers equipment at its Quebec, Canada, plant.

Pennfield Feed Mill Project On Schedule

SOUTH MONTROSE (Susquehanna Co.)–Construction is on schedule in the expansion project of the Pennfield Corporation's new livestock feed manufacturing plant near here.

"All of the main systems for pelleting, crimping, and mixing are in place," said Bob Buehler, Pennfield Feeds senior vice president, ag products division. "We are now installing the support systems and will begin testing of the electrical and other components."

Buehler also said that the boiler room is almost complete and that construction of the warehouse is proceeding well.

He noted that Pennfield hopes to have the new plant in operation by late spring, but cautioned that no livestock feeds would be distributed to area farmers until extensive testing of feeds could be completed.

"Today's livestock feeds must be produced according to exacting formulas and, at Pennfield, we will not sell the first ton of feed produced at South Montrose until we are absolutely sure we can produce livestock feeds that meet our superior quality nutritional standards," Buehler said.

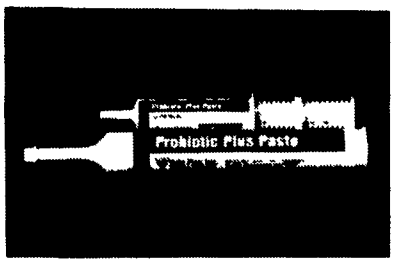
Pennfield Corporation broke ground for this $6 million project in April 1999. The plant will produce mainly dairy feeds. There are more than 287,000 dairy cows in the new plant's marketing area of northern Pennsylvania and southern New York. Sales are projected to be $8 million for the first full year of operation.

Aid Fights Stress

KNAPP, Wis. – Vets Plus, Inc. presents Probiotic Plus Paste™, an aid for all types of stress.

Probiotic Plus Paste™ is designed to increase the good bacteria in the animal's gastrointestinal tract and stimulate appetite, which may be suppressed due to the introduction of stress. Such stress would include, but is not limited to shipping, adverse weather conditions, overcrowding, parturition, weaning, antibiotic treatments or ration changes.

Probiotic Plus Paste ™ contains Lactobacillus acidophilus DDS-1 and six other naturally occurring microorganisms, antioxidant vitamins, chelated minerals, as well as other essential elements needed to ensure adequate nutrition. It is an exceptional product with outstanding results.



Probiotic Plus Paste™, is designed to increase the good bacteria in the animal's gastrointestinal tract and stimulate appetite, which may be suppressed due to the introduction of stress.

Probiotic Plus Paste™ is available in both 300 cc and 80 cc tubes. Vets Plus is proud to say that Probiotic Plus Paste™ is all natural and causes no withholding.

Novartis Seeds Releases Five New Soybean Varieties

GOLDEN VALLEY, Minn.–Novartis Seeds, Inc.-field crops is bringing soybean farmers five new NK® Brand soybean varieties in time for 2000 planting.

Each of the varieties, which range in maturity from Mid-Group 0 to Mid-Group II, includes the popular Roundup Ready® gene, and all combine high yields with strong disease-resistance packages.

Based on excellent performance in company field trials, Novartis Seeds fast-tracked the release of these varieties, providing farmers with earlier access to the improved soybean lines. However, despite the early release, Novartis Seeds' Mark Schmidt says that a good quantity of each of the varieties is available.

The five new varieties are the latest products from Novartis Seeds soybean research program–an effort that spans 30 years and has produced more than 247 improved varieties. Like their predecessors, Novartis Seeds anticipates strong demand for the new offerings.

"These varieties share the three characteristics our customers consistently request: top yield potential, Roundup Ready herbicide tolerance and comprehensive disease protection," said Schmidt, the company's soybean product manager. "Even in challenging growing environments like cool, no-till soils, these varieties have demonstrated their ability to perform."

Key characteristics for the new NK Brand Roundup Ready soybeans include:

• Variety S04-E1, Mid-Group 0. This variety is widely adapted to northern fields and high pH soils, with very good tolerance to iron deficiency chlorosis in first-year trials. In addition, it resists Phytophthora root rot with both Rps1-c gene and moderate field resistance, and includes moderate resistance to Sclerotinia white mold.

• Variety S09-Y9, Late-Group 0. Excellent emergence makes this soybean a good choice for early planting, even in cooler soils. It provides moderate resistance to Sclerotinia white mold, and resists Phytophthora root rot (Rps1-C gene, plus moderate field resistance.)

• Variety Number: S23-03, Early to Mid-Group II. This variety combines strong stress tolerance with a comprehensive disease package, making it a good choice for tough environments such as no-till drilling. It has moderate resistance to Sclerotinia white mold and brown stem rot, and resistance to Phytophthora root rot (Rps1-c gene).

• Variety Number: S24-K4, Mid-Group II. Superior stress tolerance helps this variety give very high yields, even in drier, more variable growing conditions. It features Rps1-a gene for resistance to Phytophthora root rot.

• Variety S30-P6, Mid-Group II. This variety provides the most complete protection against Phytophthora root rot with Rps1-k gene. It also resists brown stem rot and includes moderate resistance to SDS.

ARA Releases E-Commerce, Product Stewardship White Paper

ST. LOUIS, Mo. – With the advent of e-commerce as an increasingly common manner of conducting business, the Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA) has produced a policy position paper for ag retailer members on e-commerce and product stewardship.

"Today's ag retailers doing business via e-commerce, either directly or indirectly, face an increasingly wide and new range of product stewardship questions and issues. The White Paper is designed to help ag retailers effectively work with this relatively new form of business," said Paul Kindinger, president and CEO of the Agricultural Retailers Association.

"E-commerce has been a growing concern with ag retailers. They are particularly concerned about the stewardship of the products that are bought and sold through this new trade channel. ARA is concerned that such products are still handled and applied in a manner that meets all federal and state regulatory requirements," Kindinger said. "For example, California has introduced legislation to study Internet sales of agricultural crop protection products to evaluate the potential impact of such products that are not labeled or registered for use in the state."

Misapplied or mishandled products could result in damage to crops or cause environmental hazards that will prompt state and federal agencies to consider tighter use or application restrictions. In addition, retailers may be reluctant to custom apply crop protection products that they did not sell because of uncertainty about whether the product was properly labeled or was in the proper container.

Furthermore, concerns exist regarding whether products are shipped with required label rates, material data sheets, application restrictions, and other regulatory requirements. In reviewing several e-commerce sites, however, there appears to be numerous safeguards in place relating to the purchase or sale of such crop protection products.

Included among the safeguards are that users of the sites must provide a dealer/distributor license number, commercial applicator license number, and specific state licensing. Furthermore, the e-commerce site must validate licensing information with the state licensing agencies.

More information concerning the safe stewardship of various ag .related products, including crop protection products and services, can be found in the White Paper. Members who would like additional copies or more information should contact ARA at (800) 844-4900.

Pathogen Not Resistant

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – According to a scientific review given at the annual American Association of Swine Practitioners meeting, pork producers may have one less thing to worry about when it comes to herd health– antibiotic resistance by *Lawsonia intracellularis*, the bacterium that causes ileitis.

This is big news because researchers have found L. intracellularis present in 96.2 percent of all herds. Researchers calculate the financial impact from actual cases of ileitis to be as high as $1.7 billion, or $22.19 per pig in the United States, even when using a more modest 86-percent infection rate.

Dr. Steven McOrist, an internationally known veterinary pathologist from Australia, presented research results from studies that searched for antibiotic resistance in the widespread pathogen. He said, "Bacteria such as L. intracellularis don't possess some of the critical cell components needed to allow resistance to occur. In addition, numerous studies continue to show this particular bacterium is still as susceptible as ever to antibiotics such as tylosin."

Despite scientific evidence to the contrary, some producers and veterinarians may assume they've seen pigs exhibit antibiotic resistance to products such as Tylan®. McOrist explained, "This may be due to misdiagnosis because of a similarity between the characteristics of ileitis and other diseases, inadequate dosing, or pigs simply not eating enough medicated feed for efficacy."

Producers and veterinarians concerned about antibiotic effectiveness and long-term viability may take comfort in McOrist's conclusion: "The findings of this study underscore the importance of challenging assumptions about antimicrobial resistance. By understanding the uniqueness of bacterial organisms and how they interact with antibiotics, pork producers can continue to use approved products in a prudent and effective manner."

As McOrist explained to those attending the meeting, continuous exposure of L. intracellularis to products such as Tylan has yielded no evidence of antibiotic resistance. Because of this reality, the product's effectiveness has not diminished and veterinarians still recommend it for the prevention and control of ileitis.

Tylan Premix is the only product approved in the United States for the prevention and control of ileitis.