

At the special ceremony, Dr. Enrique Figueroa, USDA deputy under secretary, marketing and regulatory programs, left, presents the bovine tuberculosis "accredited free state" certification to Samuel Hayes Jr., Pennsylvania ag secretary. Photo by Everett Newswanger, editor

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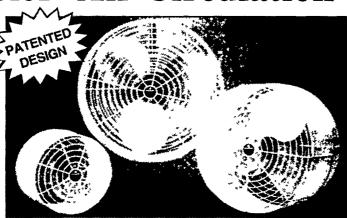
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free to a modified accredited status. Now, for more than five years, there have been no TB cases in the state, but it took this long to meet all the national requirements for USDA certifica-

Hayes said that to achieve this certification is a big win in the realm of animal health, since having TB accredited-free status is critical from an economic standpoint and reaffirms Pennsylvania as a foreign and domestic leader in agriculture. Hayes commended the efforts of the PDA and USDA and said the partnership has been very gratifying. He also recognized accredited veterinarians and cattle producers who had to deal with all the extra time, effort, and expense associated with a problem of this nature.

Since TB was discovered in Pennsylvania, cattle that were shipped from or through the state had to undergo additional veterinary lab testing before transportation and sale could be considered complete. Immediately, the cattle industry began

to work diligently to eliminate this troublesome disease. Cleanup of infected herds, additional traceback testing, and closely monitored follow-up was required to gain the new certification.

"We have had a clean state for some time now," Hayes said. "But we had to go through the protocol necessary to gain the 'accredited' status. One of the first things I asked when I became ag secretary was about our animal health program. And it was not what we wanted it to be. Now this new status brings us to where consumers, the dairy and livestock producers, and all America are positively affected. We needed to be able to say we were a TB-free state so the confidence in our agriculture industry was maintained both at home and in our foreign exports."

Figueroa said Pennsylvania's new status is a large step forward in the eradication of the disease across the nation. Pennsylvania becomes the 47th state, along with Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, to have achieved the certification.



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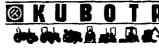
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