

USDA Commits \$56 Million

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The USDA recently announced that \$56 million this fiscal year will be made available for the eradication of pseudorabies, a contagious and potentially fatal virus that affects hogs and costs producers millions of dollars annually. This money will be used to compensate hog producers and for preventive measures.

This is part of a multiyear effort, which began in 1998, to accelerate eradication of pseudorabies in the U.S. This money will allow USDA to pay hog farmers fair market value for the voluntary destruction of swine herds known to be infected with pseudorabies. Similar activities will be funded as needed in fiscal year 2002.

"This effort will enable us to work toward elimina-

Howard County Agricultural Program Receives Top Honors

HOWARD CO., Md. — The Agricultural Marketing Program of the Howard Co. Economic Development Authority received top honors from the FORVM for Rural Maryland for its efforts in agricultural marketing and rural economic development. The program received the Outstanding Rural Economic Development Award at the 2000 Maryland Rural Development and Health Care Summit held recently at Solomons Island. Criteria for selection included noteworthy, creative and innovative techniques brought to bear on challenging economic development situations and the use of partnerships for leveraged resources in achieving business development goals.

Upon accepting the award, Robert Manfuso, secretary-treasurer of the board of directors of the Howard Co. Economic Development Authority and a member of the agriculture committee, state, "Make no mistake, we can't claim Howard Co. is a rural county, but we can claim that agriculture has a future there. The authority recognizes agriculture as a major contributor to the county's identity. It significantly adds to the quality of life for all residents in Howard Co. We are pleased that county government supports farming in Howard Co. through both an aggressive farmland preservation program and with funding for the agricultural marketing program.

Howard Co. executive James Robey acknowledged the award commenting, "Howard Co. is fortunate to have forged a strong partnership between county government and the county economic development authority. This partnership allows us to combine resources to staff and implement a strong agricultural marketing program that targets supporting existing farming enterprises and agribusiness while also identifying the types of farming best suited to our rapidly urbanizing region."

The FORVM for Rural Maryland is a state rural development council and an independent state agency. FORVM serves as a partnership of federal, state, and local government, together with the private sector, to improve the quality of life of all citizens of rural Maryland. This includes policy research and analysis, promotion of regional cooperation, and protection and enhancement of the natural resources and cultural heritage of rural Maryland.

Stream Bank Fencing Is Beneficial

SUNBURY (Northumberland Co.) — Stream bank fencing is a simple, effective way farmers can improve the water quality of the streams and the health of the livestock on their farms.

Livestock and horse owners can contact the Northumberland County Conservation District for information on several programs for assistance in installing stream bank fencing and crossings. Stream bank fencing is a low-cost, low-maintenance best management practice (BMP) that can provide many benefits to the farmer, his livestock, and the environment.

Limiting access to pasture streams can be an effective livestock and pasture management practice. Improved herd health is the most important benefit to the farmer who installs stream bank fencing. Clean, dry cattle are healthier cattle. Wet, muddy conditions increase the risk of udder infections, foot problems, and numerous other water-borne diseases spread in these conditions.

Stabilized stream crossings at controlled access areas also reduce leg and foot injuries from steep, slippery banks. Improved water quality means better drinking water for the livestock.

tion of pseudorabies from our national hog population, make pork production more profitable for our farmers, protect our international markets, and keep American agriculture safe," said Michael V. Dunn, under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs. "Pseudorabies costs U.S. pork producers about \$40 million a year, not including indirect costs associated with lost international markets. That's too much and we are going to end it now."

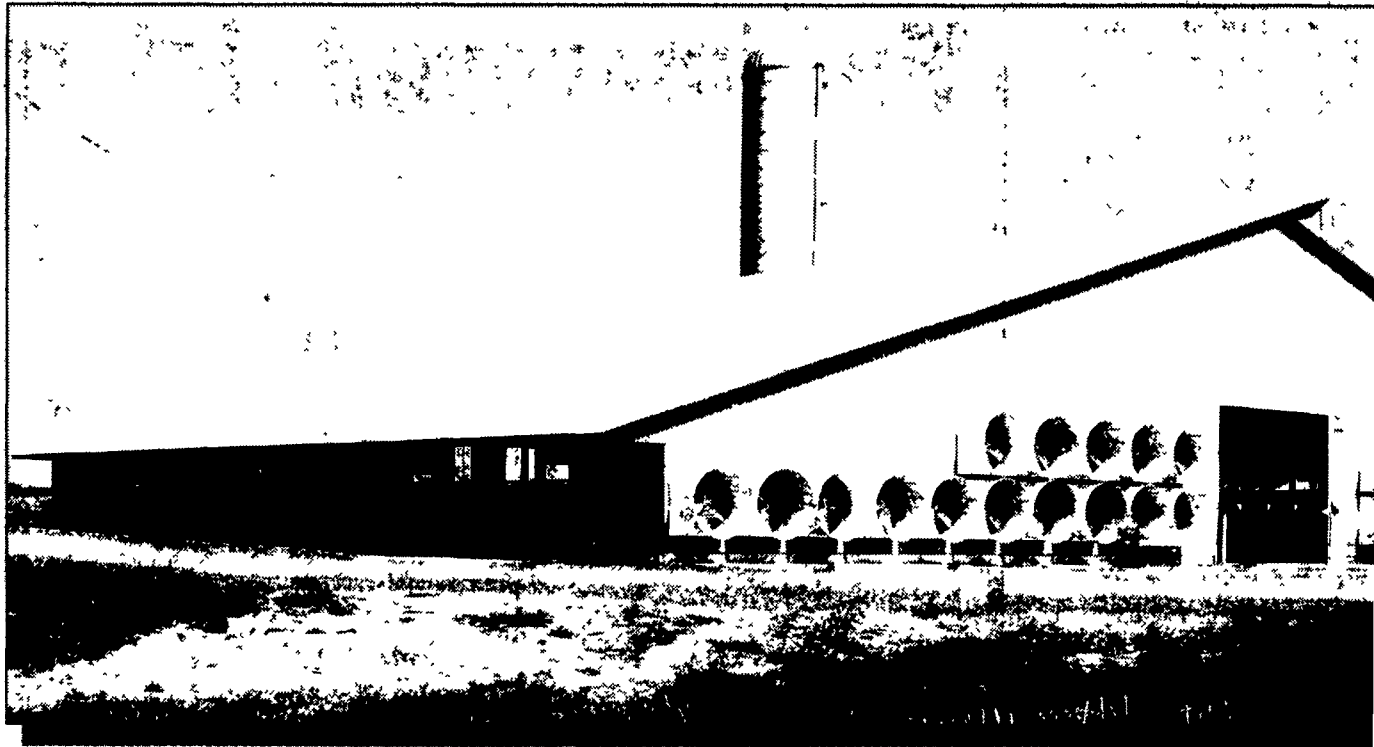
Most of the funds will be used in Iowa, where 98 percent (about 375) of infected swine herds are located. During this past winter and spring, the number of pseudorabies swine herds increased significantly in Iowa because of mild winter conditions, the spread of disease as a result of swine movements, and decreased vaccination because of lowered swine prices last year. There is one infected herd in New Jersey and one in Tennessee.

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