

Animal Disease Research Sets International Standards Of Control

WOOSTER, Ohio — Ohio State University research on two animal diseases that can cause severe economic losses in the swine and poultry industries if not detected early is getting international recognition.

Two research labs, headed by Linda Saif and Mo Saif within the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, are the only two centers in the world where developments in transmissible gastroenteritis and infectious bursal disease, respectively, set the standards for testing, detecting, and controlling for those diseases.

The "reference" labs are part of the Office International Des Epizooties (OIE), an international organization comprised of 155 member countries whose purpose is to report the existence of animal diseases, coordinate research on surveillance and control, and examine regulations on international trade in animals and animal products. OIE keeps track of more than 50 diseases that affect the animal industry and have the potential to spread to humans. Such diseases include bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease), scrapie, Rift Valley fever, bovine tuberculosis, salmonellosis, trichinellosis, rabies and Bluetongue.

Mo Saif, head of OARDC's Food Animal Health Research Program (FAHRP) whose research includes infectious bursal disease, said the role of the "reference" labs is to collaborate with OIE members to provide existing information and reagents on a particular disease and give recommendations on effective means of control.

"On occasion, lab experts are invited to review regulations and make recommendations for any necessary changes," he said. "The recommendations are based on available knowledge of the disease. Such collaboration also opens the door for future research to fill knowledge gaps in a particular area."

Mo Saif recently met with OIE experts in Paris to address concerns from Australian and New Zealand industry professionals over the possibility of the presence of infectious bursal disease virus in imported chicken meat. Issues of viral persistence in the meat and the effectiveness of vaccinations were discussed and recommendations were made on new regulations for import and export. In addition, research needs and priorities were established.

Infectious bursal disease or Gumboro disease is caused by infectious bursal disease virus,

which alters the immune system in young chickens three to six weeks old, making them susceptible to other infections and diseases. Infectious bursal disease is highly contagious — if one chick is infected, there is nearly a 100 percent chance an entire flock has the disease. There is no known cure and the only method of control is vaccination.

Transmissible gastroenteritis, studied by OARDC researcher Linda Saif, is an enteric disease of pigs caused by the virus of the

same name. Marked by diarrhea and vomiting, the disease is most common in baby pigs. One hundred percent of infected newborns may die. The method for controlling the virus is through vaccinations.

OARDC researchers have developed a RT-PCR test for use directly on field specimens for detecting transmissible gastroenteritis virus (TGEV) that distinguishes it from its less-damaging variant, porcine res-

piratory coronavirus. This test is very useful for export-import purposes to markets where animals free of TGEV are required.

U.S. houses 30 of the 160 worldwide research labs that focus on different animal diseases. The labs at FAHRP are the only two OIE member facilities located at The Ohio State University.

For more information on the organization and animal diseases, log on to www.oie.int.

LCCD To Give Ann Brown Memorial Scholarship

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The Lancaster County Conservative District (LCCD) will accept scholarship applications from graduating seniors who will be continuing their education with the intent of majoring in a curriculum which focuses on natural resources and/or conservation.

Some examples of acceptable programs of studies would be environmental sciences, wildlife and/or fisheries biology; environmental resource management, or other related programs leading to an advanced degree

(two-year Associate Degree or four-year Baccalaureate Degree) will be considered.

The scholarship will provide two \$1,000 scholarships for enrollment in a post-high school institution during 2001/2002. Successful candidates will be eligible for a follow-up sophomore year scholarship of \$400.

The completed application must be received in the LCCD office by April 12. The scholarship committee of LCCD will conduct a review of the applicants. Basis for the selection will be determined on past perform-

ance and activities, current school and community involvement, future purpose, and direction plus the applicant's ability to communicate.

The scholarship committee, prior to the final selection, will interview the top five candidates. An announcement of the successful candidates will be made on May 15.

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