

## Cattle Virus May Contribute To Development Of Turkey Disease

WOOSTER, Ohio — A common cattle virus has been found to cause an enteric disease in turkeys that can lead to poul enteritis and mortality syndrome, an emerging disease that causes high mortality rates and severe economic losses to the poultry industry.

A team of Ohio State University researchers with the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center's Food Animal Health Research Program found that specific pathogen-free young turkey poults injected with a strain of bovine coronavirus, along with a novel astrovirus, developed a disease similar to poul enteritis and mortality syndrome (PEMS). Research has shown that turkey coronavirus and the astrovirus, which attacks the immune system, contribute to the development of the disease.

"When it was found that the coronavirus contributes to the

development of PEMS, it raised a question of whether turkeys raised close to beef cattle operations could become infected with the bovine coronavirus," said Mo Saif, head of the project. "So we took the coronavirus from cattle and gave it to turkeys and found that it caused a disease similar to that caused by turkey coronavirus."

PEMS was first diagnosed in 1991 in North Carolina. Since then it has spread to other states such as South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Indiana and has cost the poultry industry more than \$34 million in losses. The disease, which attacks poults age two to four weeks, can cause a mortality rate as high as 70 percent. PEMS weakens the immune system, leaving turkeys highly susceptible to bacterial and parasitic infections. Those birds that survive become stunted in growth. That is, the turkey no longer gains weight

despite the amount of feed it consumes.

So far, PEMS has not been found in Ohio, simply because the turkey coronavirus and astrovirus have not been identified in flocks on Ohio farms. Saif advises, however, to follow strict biosecurity procedures to avoid any possible contamination of flocks.

"Give the turkeys vitamins and minerals. Make sure the ventilation system is working well and that water and feed are fresh and available," said Saif. "Also keep wild birds and other animals off the farm." He added that it's also not a good idea to keep more than one animal species together or more than one age group of turkeys in the same area.

The research team also studied whether chickens, which also suffer from a similar coronavirus that causes infectious bronchitis, could infect turkeys.

## Farmers Union Delegates: Halt Consolidation In Food Industries

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Delegates to the National Farmers Union's (NFU) 99th anniversary convention adopted new policies amid growing concerns

"We found that the coronavirus in chickens does not cause the disease in turkeys, although the two viral agents are very similar to each other," said Saif.

The team has been collaborating with researchers from North Carolina State University for over three years to identify the cause of PEMS and develop tests to help diagnose the disease. There are no vaccines available to protect turkey flocks.

Other OSU researchers involved in the project include Linda Saif, M. Yu, Y. Tang, M. Ismail, K. Cho and R. Dearth.

over the headlong rush toward corporate concentration in agribusiness and other food industries.

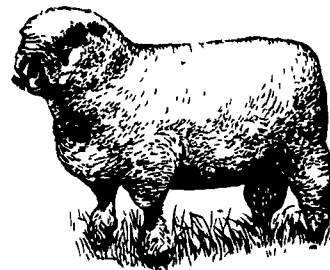
In addition to opposing the growing consolidation in food production, the delegates also reemphasized the need for greater antitrust enforcement, review of mergers and business combinations, and laws that protect family farmers and ranchers from other market-distorting business activity.

"As mergers in production, processing, transportation and retail continue to weigh the playing field against the American family farmer and rancher, we must aggressively pursue measures to protect our family farms, consumers, and the markets that serve them," said Leland Swenson, president of NFU. "Our members continue the call for Congress, the Departments of Justice and Agriculture and the Federal Trade Commission to provide the necessary scrutiny, resources, and tools to combat this trend that is destructive to agriculture."

The Farmers Union policy calls for a reversal of the trend toward a highly horizontally and vertically integrated production system through the enforcement of antitrust and fair competition laws. The special policy adoption also calls for a temporary moratorium on large agricultural mergers to allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to collect data that provide Congress with important information that would guide action to strengthen antitrust laws and develop economic impact statements detailing the effect such mergers will have on family farmers and ranchers and rural economies.

The convention adopted policy positions that would require firms of a certain size to provide documentation on business combinations that behave like mergers, require the Department of Justice to provide rational for permitting large business mergers, prohibit meat packer ownership of livestock prior to a slaughter, a practice that manipulates livestock prices to the detriment of independent and contract producers, repeal the Illinois Brick Supreme Court decision that bars farmers and ranchers from taking legal action unless the harm created by antitrust or anticompetitive behavior directly affects them, and opposes "slotting fees" charged to suppliers of food retail entities in order to place their product on the self.

"A fair and competitive atmosphere must be restored to all our food industries," said Swenson. "Congress must work with the USDA, the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission to respond to the growing concentration of power into the hands of a few players in the food industries. This is vital to our markets, our family farmers and ranchers, and for the revitalization of independently owned businesses everywhere."



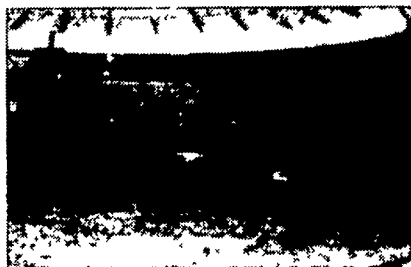
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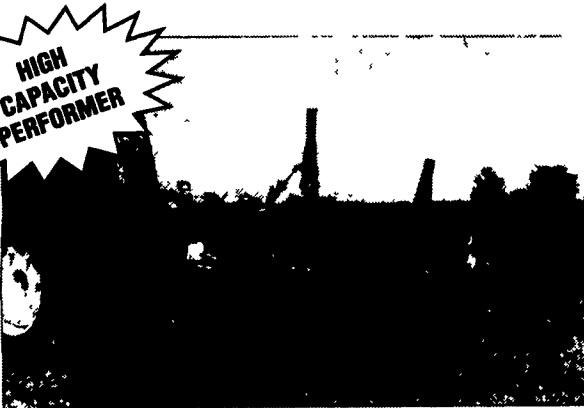
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