

Biosecurity Essential To Saving Rare Breeds

PITTSBORO, N.C. — Protecting your stock from infectious disease is an important aspect of conservation. The activities and strategies employed in preventing disease transmission constitutes a biological security program.

Biosecurity is important at all times, but the crises in the European Union resulting from the outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) makes this topic especially pertinent.

Biosecurity is one of the most difficult management concepts to consistently employ, but is especially critical for owners of rare breeds because these small population make them especially vulnerable. Teaching and talking

about biosecurity is relatively easy. Doing it is difficult, but that should not dissuade farmers from establishing a program.

Do not be intimidated by your inability to implement a comprehensive program. A minimal biosecurity program implemented in increments is better than no program at all.

Livestock owners should observe these guidelines at all times, but especially when there has been an outbreak of an infectious disease:

- First and foremost, use common sense. Do not bring germs to your animals and do not bring your animals to germs.

- Post a sign at the gate or entrance to your farm and at the

animal facilities that tells people that your animals are important and you are trying to prevent disease transfer.

- Limit contact with other animals. Clean and disinfect your clothes and boots following contact.

- Limit your visits to other farms, and clean and disinfect your clothes and boots following visits.

- When buying stock, establish a quarantine area on your farm. Do chores associated with these animals last. Clean and disinfect your clothes and boots following these chores, then shower.

- Do not share tools or equipment with other farmers. If sharing high-priced items is absolute-

ly necessary, thoroughly clean and disinfect the equipment (tires included) before they leave your farm and before allowing them back on your farm.

- Exercise control over visitors' access to your animals.

- Install a farm gate and lock it.

- Wash down and disinfect all vehicles entering the farm. Should we have an outbreak of FMD, clean and disinfect feed trucks, delivery vehicles, gas meter reader, and all other vehicles before allowing them on your farm. If you drive off your farm, disinfect your vehicle before re-entering your farm.

In the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease, all of the

above guidelines should be enhanced and rigidly enforced. There should be no outside contact and no visitors. Clean and disinfect all incoming people and vehicles — without exception.

Some viruses can survive in the human respiratory tract for several days. Should there be a disease outbreak, you should not expose yourself to diseased animals, or to people who have worked with diseased animals, and then care for your own animals.

The disaster resulting from reportable diseases like FMD would be compounded if endangered breeds of livestock and poultry are destroyed and their survival further threatened. Plan for their safekeeping today.

NCGA Requests \$50 Million For Plant Biotechnology/Genomics Research

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) recently requested that a House subcommittee allocate \$50 million for research on plant genomics and plant biotechnology in the FY 2002 budget.

Delaware, Ohio, farmer Gary Davis, DVM, Ph.D., - who is a member of the NCGA's Customer and Business Development Action Team - told the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs

that this investment could help alleviate human suffering.

Citing statistics showing that two billion people worldwide suffer from malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies, Davis said, "Much of this human suffering can be alleviated in a sustainable

manner if we were to (1) increase U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funding for plant genomics and plant biotechnology research to increase yields, enhance micronutrients in food, and create "edible vaccines," and (2) if we were to target funding for the training of scientists and plant breeders from developing countries in biotechnology."

"We have opportunities with plant biotechnology to deliver "edible vaccines" without the need for any of complicated handling procedures, without the need for refrigeration or sterile equipment, and we can deliver them in a sustainable manner through the regeneration of plants," Davis said. He cited an example where plant biotechno-

logy has made significant advances in delivering the Hepatitis B vaccine in corn and bananas and the cholera vaccine in potatoes.

This research has other benefits, such as the development of crops that can endure droughts, pests and plant diseases that can devastate crops, leading often to population-wide starvation. And Davis said that the fruit of this research is not entirely altruistic. "When scientists solve these problems in poor countries, they not only help people feed themselves and move up from poverty, they help ensure safe harvests across our own country."

The Davis testimony was also made on behalf of the American Farm Bureau Federation and the American Society of Plant Physiologists.

Corn Growers Praise Bioenergy Budget

ST. LOUIS, Mo. - The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) is praising Secretary of Energy Spence Abraham for recognizing the important role plant and crop-based products can assume in the future of U.S. energy.

The Department of Energy (DOE) budget calls for reducing the Industries of the Future budget by 36 percent; however Secretary Abraham successfully protected the DOE Ag Vision 2020 program from any cuts. The Ag Vision program focuses on helping ag, forestry and chemical industries increase the use of crops instead of petroleum as feedstocks to produce consumer goods including plastics, paint and adhesives. The program's goal is for plants to become the source of 10 percent of chemical feedstocks by 2020.

"Every product we produce from plants increases the amount of petroleum that is available for other uses and benefits the environment with renewables," said NCGA President Lee Klein, a farmer from Battle Creek, Neb. "Long-term we can increase farm income by several billion dollars if we use plants instead of petroleum for 10 percent of the industrial market."

In addition to protecting the Ag Vision program, Secretary Abraham included \$5

million in the budget for an integrated Bioproducts/Bioenergy program. This will support research and development projects to use plants instead of petroleum for chemical feedstocks, bio-based fuels such as ethanol, and other bio-based sources of energy.

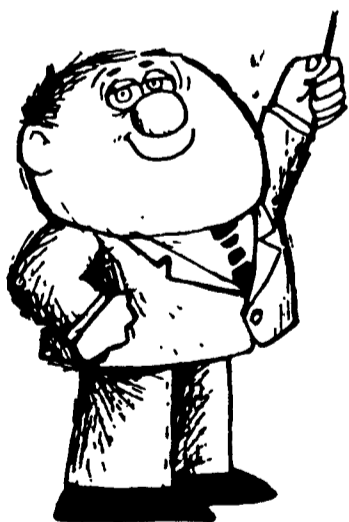
"The NCGA has been a leader in the effort to focus research on renewables as a source of industrial feedstocks. The Ag Vision and Bioproducts/Bioenergy programs will decrease oil imports, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase recycling opportunities and create new industries here in the United States," Klein ex-

plained.

"Corn Growers are pleased that the Secretary recognizes the importance that crops such as corn can play in the production of chemical feedstocks," he continued. "And, NCGA achieved a major victory with the preservation of the Ag Vision program and the bioenergy initiative in the DOE budget."

Klein said NCGA will continue to work through the appropriations process to gain additional funding for corn in the DOE Ag Vision program and the Bioproducts initiative.

For more information about NCGA, visit www.ncga.com.



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