

# CANARI May Be Necessary

(Continued from Page A1)

gence. This proposed network would coordinate and mount a response to terrorist threats or attacks, according to Norton.

Some "terrorists" — in this case, disgruntled employees — have already wreaked havoc in several ag sectors of the country. Certain personality types, said Norton, include former employees seeking personal revenge, the "lone nut" person distributing deadly anthrax, and other types. A target such as agriculture could provide unimaginable damage.

Norton spoke about real events. One packing house worker placed metal screws into hams; one slaughter plant was threatened with HIV-infected blood (though no blood was found on the meat, there was infected blood found in a tube); used condoms thrown into food processing; and the Tylenol scare back in the 1980s, when a product brand name was almost bankrupted when cyanide was placed in bottles (in the days before safety product packaging).

The FBI, working with USDA/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), investigates all credible threats. But Norton believes what the U.S. lacks most of all is a single, integrated system of coordinating defense and response during agroterrorist attack. CANARI would fill this need.

Since the Sept. 11 tragedy, a need for this proposed network is evident, according to Norton. Federal and state groups, along with agri-industry, would work with a proposed National Agroterrorism Defense Center to assist in investigating and determining possible threats and acting quickly to protect the industry.

But companies can wise up now and consider protection against their industries "an investment, not an expense," Norton said. "You are going to have to deal with these things."

Norton noted that a Cable Network News reporter — not an FBI agent — actually brought credible evidence that Iraq was targeting the U.S. poultry industry. Threats from countries the U.S. considers to harbor terrorists are regarded seriously, but the industry as a whole must remain vigilant.

## A.I. Threat

At home, a real threat involving A.I. has hit 39 flocks through Virginia and North Carolina, according to Dave Kradel, PennAg Industries Association and Penn State Department of Poultry Science.

The poultry consultant noted

that most of the problem centers on Virginia, including turkey breeders, meat birds, several broiler/breeders, and quail flocks.

The virus is H7N2, same as the one in the live bird market.

An attempt was made early this week to clean out all live bird markets, including 81 in New York, 30 in New Jersey, three in Pennsylvania, five in Massachusetts, three in Rhode Island, and one in Connecticut. Each market was paid \$3,000

from USDA to clean and disinfect and get the A.I. virus threat under control.

Before the so-called "chicken holiday," the live bird markets — 60 percent of those in New York and 43 percent in New Jersey — tested positive for H7N2.

Pennsylvania has had, in place, a very extensive A.I. program since the outbreak in the mid-1980s, when millions of dollars were lost to the devastating disease.

Kradel noted Norton's comments about the effect of a widespread agroterrorist attack. If terrorism would be brought in the form of A.I. to multiple sites, "the only way to deal with it would be the use of the vaccine."

However, the export markets shy away from poultry that have been treated with vaccines for disease.

## Antibiotics Critical

Kradel, who also spoke earlier, noted that antibiotics are critical for the literal health of the poultry industry.

Of the 50 million pounds of antibiotics used in the U.S., 24 million pounds are used in animals. Some critics believe the controversy that has developed — that use of too many antibiotics in poultry and the potential for disease agents to develop resistance, and cause potential human concerns — has no real scientific proof. However, both sides can point to evidence to support their case.

This public perception issue will be the focus of a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) public meeting on antibiotics and antibiotic resistance Friday, April 26, at the Capitol Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C., from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

There are real worries for the industry, however, according to Kradel. A federally proposed bill could ban the use of eight different antibiotics in the U.S.

If that happens, production could drop 5-10 percent, with a resulting increase in poultry prices at the retail level.

According to John Schleifer, Intervet technical service veterinarian, the poultry industry

spends \$150 million on antibiotics in the U.S. Yet American consumers use \$600 million worth of personal health supplements a year — and that industry continues to skyrocket — while worrying about potential health effects of antibiotics used on animals.

If large meat suppliers one day are told by huge fast food and supermarket chains to discontinue antibiotic use, and no new antibiotics are introduced, what's the industry to do to control large disease outbreaks?

"We are going to bear the brunt of the whole tidal wave," said Schleifer. If the antibiotics are pulled, "we are up the proverbial creek without a paddle."

For now, according to Eric Gingerich, DVM, New Bolton Center Poultry Lab, responsible use of the antibiotics is key. Maintaining the proper veterinary-client-patient relationship is critical.

## Regulations

Producers themselves have to focus on the ways in which management of flocks is being regulated. The next regulated compound will be ammonia emissions, noted Bill Achor, environmental coordinator, Wenger's Feed Mill.

Producers in Kentucky and Georgia are under lawsuits for ammonia emissions from poultry operations. In Kentucky, the environmental group Sierra filed suit on a broiler grower for ammonia emissions.

Emission monitoring is continuing in Indiana, with tests in Kentucky and Iowa and soon Pennsylvania, noted Achor.

In addition, major changes to the nutrient management law are scheduled to include adoption of phosphorous as the limiting factor. If so, the phosphorous site index will be used, noted Achor.

## Environmental Quality Plans

Amy Van Blarcom, director of government affairs for PennAg Industries Association, provided details on various environmental quality plans that producers could adopt now.

Van Blarcom provided details of the following:

- PEACCE, or Pennsylvania



Tuesday afternoon speakers at the Poultry Sales and Service Conference at Penn State. From left, Dennis Herr, egg producer from Elizabethtown; Bob Norton, Auburn University; Eric Gingerich, New Bolton Center; and Dave Kradel, poultry consultant, PennAg Industries and Penn State. Photo by Andy Andrews, editor



Tuesday's speakers at the Poultry Sales and Service Conference were, from left, Dr. Robert Elkin, head of the poultry science department at Penn State; Bill Achor, Wenger Feeds; Phillip Clauer, Penn State; Paul Aho, Poultry Perspective; and Amy Van Blarcom, PennAg Industries Association. Photo by Andy Andrews, editor

Environmental Agricultural Conservation Certification of Excellence Program.

- On-Farm Assessment and Environmental Review.

- Agricultural Environmental Management Systems.

- Project XL, for excellence in leadership, a national program.

- FARM ★A★ Syst, common to dairy operations, but useful on poultry operations for the

water quality components.

PennAg is looking for 30 poultry farmers to participate in an environmental management systems (EMS) assessment program pilot-tested in Pennsylvania. Contact Amanda Mende at PennAg at (717) 651-5920 or amende@pennag.com for more information.

For information on any of the environmental quality programs, contact Van Blarcom at PennAg at (717) 651-5920.

## Beef Market On 'Roller Coaster' Ride

AMES, Iowa — "America's beef market roller coaster ride shows no sign of slowing down, and many producers believe there is simply no competitive rhyme nor reason to domestic market price swings," National Farmers Organization (NFO) President Paul Olson said this week. Volatility of as much as 10 percent, or \$12, can occur in a very short period of time.

"What particularly irritates U.S. producers is the fact that a major fast food retailer announced last week that it cannot secure enough beef supplies in the United States to fill their needs," Olson said. "Yet in reality, with domestic market price levels as low as they are, there should be no reason why they cannot obtain an economical product here in the U.S."

According to recent research, there is more hamburger available than ever before, and beef costs 30 percent less than it did in 1970.

Some marketing insiders believe fast food restaurants justify their purchase of imported beef by stating that there's not enough lean domestic beef supply. "If supply and demand is what markets are truly based

upon, then why do those fast food retailers report there is a shortage, while domestic market prices are effectively at very low levels," said National Farmers Director of Livestock, Brian Harris. "Independent livestock producers have been laboring under increasing input costs, yet packer/processors are paying less for the animals they purchase."

As U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Conferees prepare to complete their work on a new farm bill, one of the most contentious issues at hand is a ban on packer ownership of livestock.

"When it comes right down to it, packers are creating a surplus and shortage environment in the markets because of the animals they own or have under contract," Harris said.

Another issue of some controversy is Country of Origin labeling. If enacted, it would inform consumers what country their meat and produce originates from. It's important because a study indicates that nine of 10 Americans would purchase U.S. beef if given the opportunity.

"The issue at hand for Ameri-

ca's consumers, is the fact that a mere one percent of imported food is inspected," said Olson. U.S. government auditors report that we rely on foreign inspectors to police the plants that send us food. But according to the Western Organization Resource Council's (WORC) Agricultural and Food Issues Team, the system is not working. Because as food imports have gone up, so have reports of food-related illness.

Interestingly enough, a 1930s law requires that nearly all retail goods label where they are produced; yet meat and produce remains exempted more than 60 years later. "It's worth pausing to consider the relative importance of knowing where our clothing is made, yet remain blissfully unaware where the meat and produce is grown that helps keep each and every one of us in good health," said Harris.

"If we're going to place the benefit of other countries ahead of our own producers, who contribute to our national economic base, then we have some real problems to deal with," Olson said.



Wednesday speakers from the poultry conference, from left, Dan Shaw, Penn State; Eva Pendleton, Penn State; Eileen Wheeler, Penn State; and Stephanie Frankenbach, Purina Mills. Photo by Andy Andrews, editor