



FOCUS ON DAIRY
Penn State Cooperative Extension
Capitol Region Dairy Team

MEET BETH GROVE

Beth Grove recently accepted a position with Penn State Cooperative Extension to work as a dairy/environmental extension agent in Lancaster County. She is a graduate of Virginia Tech, where she studied under Dr. Raymond Nebel to receive her master's degree in reproductive physiology.

In addition to growing up on a dairy farm and helping to manage the family dairy farm, she has worked as a sire analyst for an AI organization, worked as a regional extension dairy agent in the Shenandoah Valley of Vir-

ginia, and as a vocational agricultural instructor. Beth has a wealth of experience to share with us, and we welcome her to the Capitol Region Extension Dairy Team.

GETTING THE COW HERD BRED DURING THE SUMMER HEAT

M. Beth Grove
Extension Agent —
Dairy/Environment
Lancaster County

The summer of 2002 has arrived with a vengeance, and many dairy herds in our area are experiencing the effects of heat stress in their reproductive programs.

Dairy cattle are difficult to catch in heat during any time of the year, and research has shown that the average lactating cow stands to be mounted only nine times within an eight-hour period during each heat cycle. As the

weather becomes hot, cows will become even less active with fewer mounts during estrus.

Heat stress can also cause problems with the developing embryo, including early embryonic death. Since it takes more than two months for individual follicles on the ovary to fully develop, the effects of heat stress on reproduction may be seen well into the autumn months.

Many producers see a herd bull as a "quick cure" for summer breeding problems, but heat affects the bull as much as the cow. Studies have shown that even short periods of summer heat stress can adversely affect semen quality for several weeks. The amounts of semen produced by the bull can also be reduced, resulting in lower pregnancy rates.

So what can be done to increase reproductive efficiency during the summer months? Cer-

tainly keeping cows as cool and stress-free as possible is important, but these additional tips may help your breeding program during the next several weeks:

- Watch for signs of heat more frequently — three or four times daily whenever possible. Observe the cows for heat during cooler periods of the day, ideally during early morning or late evening.

- Use estrus synchronization programs to aid or even eliminate heat detection.

- Use bulls with above-average "ERCs" or estimated conception rates. Most AI companies carry bulls that have been identified as "superior" settlers.

- Try to breed cows as soon as possible after catching them for insemination. Don't expect them to stand in a poorly ventilated area without feed or water for long periods of time before breeding.

Poultry Exhibits Cancelled At County Fairs

SUMMIT STATION (Schuylkill Co.) — There will be no poultry or egg classes offered at fairs in Pennsylvania until further notice due to an Avian Influenza outbreak in Virginia.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, state veterinarian, Dr. John Enck, "It is completely understood that there is considerable interest in poultry exhibits to include eggs for display for competition. But given the volatile situation with Avian Influenza at the present time in the eastern U.S.A., we must protect Pennsylvania's poultry industry, which generates almost 700 million dollars annually."

Avian Influenza cannot be transmitted to the human species through the ingestion of poultry, eggs, or meat. Therefore, food stands at county fairs are permitted to serve poultry products.

"The Schuylkill County Fair is sad to announce that there will be no poultry or egg displays at the Fair this year," said Craig R. Morgan, fair president. "However, we fully understand the severity of the situation and agree that we must protect Pennsylvania's poultry industry at this time," Morgan concluded.

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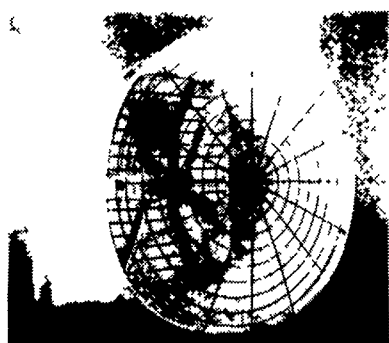
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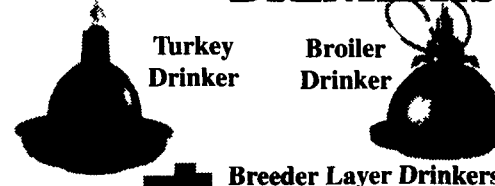
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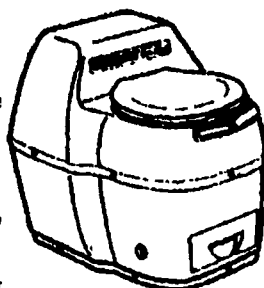
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