

Nebraska Cattlemen Help Defend Beef Checkoff

LINCOLN, Neb. — In defending the beef checkoff recently before the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Paul, Minn., an attorney for the Nebraska Cattlemen argued that the First Amendment does not come into play on the programs constitutionality.

The generic beef promotion by the Cattlemens Beef Board in this case represents government messages, and producers who object to it therefore have no First Amendment complaint, just as pacifists have no First Amendment complaint when the government urges people to consider a career in the military.

The Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) attorney and one from the U.S. Department of Justice, representing USDA on behalf of the Cattlemens Beef Board, made arguments appealing a June 2002 decision by U.S. District Court Judge Charles Kornmann, who ruled that the checkoff was "unconstitutional and unenforceable."

Since Judge Kornmann's decision, two other district courts in Montana and the District of Columbia have ruled that promotion programs such as the beef checkoff constitute government messages.

First, the purpose of the messages to maintain a healthy beef industry was established by Congress in the Beef Act and by the Secretary of Agriculture through regulation.

Second, the government message is communicated through the Beef Board, which was created by Congress and whose checkoff-paying beef producers are appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

And third, the Secretary of Agriculture exercises supervision over the activities of the Board to ensure that it communicates the government's message.



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Poultry The Priority

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conomic impact," according to Dunn. The disease can infect other avian species — in fact, 236 kinds of birds.

The disease can survive for weeks in moisture. However common disinfectants, heat, dryness, and sunlight can inactivate END.

On Oct. 1, 2002, a game fowl flock in Los Angeles was first reported to be END-positive, which spread by Dec. 19 to the first commercial flock.

California has more than 700 positive premises in six counties.

In January, backyard poultry in Nevada and Arizona were tested positive for END.

In response, besides depopulation, the USDA has plans for national surveillance. "It's not just a California problem, it's our problem, too," said Dunn.

Greg Kirkham, Westfield Group, discussed the "care, custody, and control" clause of insurance.

Paul Sauder, Sauder's Eggs, and Gene Petit, Wenger's Feed Mill, Inc., discussed animal care.

"As a company, we look at it (animal welfare) and say, 'it's a mindset.'" Being good stewards, said Sauder, "translates into what I call the vision of ethics as a company and as an industry. Customers are telling us today they want us to treat our chickens humanely... we have to be

willing to say, 'how are we going to grow feed that will feel good?'"

"It all boils down to what I call doing the right thing."

Petit described results from a cage density study conducted by Wenger's Feed Mill. The study focused on the impact that cage density has in a commercial facility.

Demands of fast food restaurants triggered the study, he said.

Workers measured production, mortality, water consumption, case weight, and "dirties," or eggs with debris on the shell.

Birds were divided into three groups, with the nine-bird group having 53.3 square inches, the seven-bird groups having 68.6 inches, and the six-bird groups having 80 square inches per bird.

One surprising find was that "There was no real difference" between mortality in the birds of the six- and seven-bird groups, but less mortality in the nine-bird groups.

However "there was a larger difference in production than we expected," as there was not only higher production but also almost one pound difference between the six- and nine-bird groups.

Dr. Eric Gingrich, Poultry Diagnostic Laboratory, University of Pennsylvania, New Bolton Center, provided a hen/pullet health update.

Swine School Features Small-Scale Systems

ITHACA, N.Y. — In response to growing interest from small farmers, the 2003 Cornell Swine School, set for March 20-21, will include one full day of educational programming specifically for small-scale producers and those thinking about getting started in small-scale pork production. This is the first time that organizers are offering a focus on small-scale systems since 1983, when the Swine School first began.

"There is a real need for this small farm initiative," said Tro Bui, extension associate with Cornell's Department of Animal Science. Bui regularly fields in-

quiries from people wanting to convert old dairy barns for production of swine, goats or sheep. "I get all kinds of basic questions, like 'where can we buy breeding stock? Where is the market? What should I feed?'"

The first day of the Cornell Swine School on Thursday, March 20 is for producers of any size, while the next day is targeted for smaller producers. Students in the small farm session will learn about basic swine health management, artificial insemination, managing baby pigs, feeds and feeding, group housing systems, marketing opportunities, and more.

The Cornell Swine School is conducted at the Livestock Pavilion and in Morrison Hall on the Cornell campus, with some sessions at the Cornell Swine Farm. The program includes both classroom and hands-on training, including practice, with injections, tail clipping, castration, artificial insemination, and diagnosis of health problems by necropsy.

To register for the 2003 Cornell Swine School, call Tro Bui at (607) 592-1438. For information on a variety of small farm topics, visit Cornell's Small Farms Web Site at www.smallfarms.cornell.edu.

Transition Cow Workshops Set

HUNTINGDON (Huntingdon Co.) and BERLIN (Somerset Co.) — Penn State Extension is hosting a Transition Cow Workshop to help teach participants proper transition cow feeding, health management, and housing. The workshop will also look at the nutritional role of phosphorus in dairy rations.

The workshop will be a morning lecture section followed by a visit to a local farm.

Dr. Gabriella Varga and Dr. Bob Van Saun will speak on "Feeding the Transition Cow" and "Health Management Systems." Dr. Zhiguo Wu will address "Controlling Phosphorus in Dairy Rations," and John Tyson will speak on "Special Needs Housing".

The Transition Cow Workshop will be offered March 18 at the Huntingdon County Extension Office in Huntingdon from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and March 20 at the Berlin Fire Hall in Berlin from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The cost of the workshop will be \$15 per person to cover the

cost of lunch and educational materials.

For more information about the Transition Cow Workshop, contact John Tyson at (717) 248-9618 or at jtyson@psu.edu

Grazier To Demonstrate Aeration Tillage

WERNERSVILLE (Berks Co.) — Forrest Stricker, dairy grazier from the Wernersville area, will host a field day at his farm Tuesday, March 25 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The focus of the field day will be an aeration tiller first designed in New Zealand in 1983 and recently redesigned by Jim Martindale, soil scientist.

According to Stricker, the tine tiller can be used for a wide range of tillage jobs, from aerating pastures to heavier work preparing soil for seeding.

Stricker operates a semi-seasonal, certified organic dairy farm, milking about 100 cows during the peak season.

The field day is free of charge. Guests should bring their own lunch. Drinks will be provided.

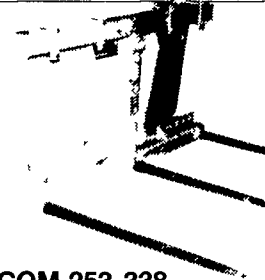
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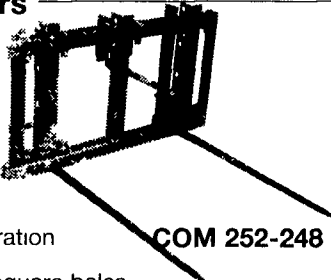
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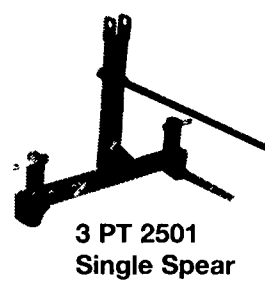
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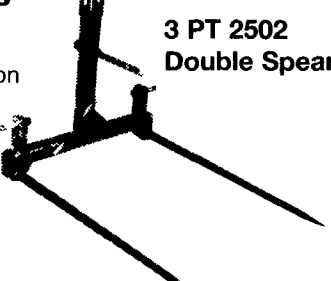
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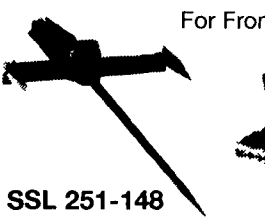
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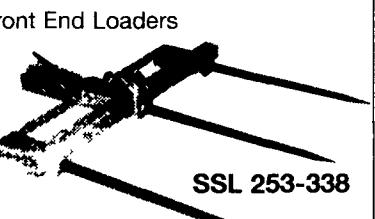


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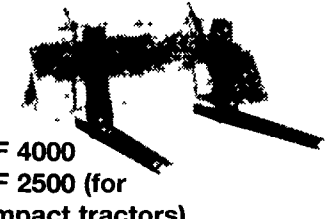
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