

County Ramblings

County Agricultural Age

The discovery of para-influenza 3 may be another step in solving the mystery of what causes shipping fever. Dr. George Woods, University of Illinois veterinarian, recently reported that para-influenza 3 is a virus isolated from children with respiratory disease, Dr. Woods said. However, scientists are not sure whether infected cattle can infect people, or vice versa.

Antibodies provide a built-in resistance to disease. Cows that have been infected with shipping fever pass antibodies on to their calves via the colostrum, the cow's first milk. These antibodies persist for several months in some calves. Antibodies are also produced through vaccines. Dr. Woods said, "Calves vaccinated a few days before weaning have shown antibodies that persist during the critical period of exposure and stress following weaning and shipment."

Fingerprinting the Bulls

The Animal Health Trust's Livestock Research Center in England, has developed a novel method of "fingerprinting" bulls. The aim is to provide breeders with a reliable method of classifying their stock according to disease-susceptibility, production-potential, fertility and other inherited characteristics.

The Center's technique for blood grouping is acquiring increasing practical importance—particularly in A. I. routine. Early results suggest that there might be a connection between the serum type of bulls and their "relative breeding value."

The test is known as starch gel electrophoresis and consists of passing an electric current through a starch gel to which blood serum from an animal has been added. The constituents of the serum are separated and a pattern is produced in the form of bands. Research has proved these bands to be a distinctive, permanent and immutable as finger prints in the human race. But unlike finger prints, the blood serum patterns are closely inherited.

Feed Wastage

Feed wastage is one of the leaks in poultry management that substantially increase cost of production. Feed hopper design is an important consideration in reducing feed wastage. Results of Iowa trials show as much as 10 pounds of feed per hen loss in a year due to differences in feeder design. Ten pounds of feed per year is about 10% of the feed used by a hen.

Trial results show deeper and wider feeders certainly reduce feed wastage. Feeders 6 3/4 inches wide by 4 1/2 inches deep lose 10 pounds per hen less feed than a feeder 3 3/4 inches by 2 1/2 inches.

Fence Post Treatment

The T. J. Post Farm at OSU has been testing post preservative treatment since 1928. This Progress Report 12, released by the Oregon Forest Research Center, is available to Oregon farmers at the Extension office.

It is worth knowing that all Douglas-fir posts that were pressure treated with creosote 31 years ago remained in excellent condition.

The soaking treatment, using penta or creosote is proving effective. The oldest test of this method in Oregon is in its 22nd year. A lodgepole pine test has posts in excellent condition with no failure at 10 years using penta.

The early tests of the salt treatment have all been removed after service of well over 20 years. A current salt test on Douglas-fir has 2/3 of the posts standing after 11 years and tops severely decayed. A salt test of lodgepole pine is nearly gone after 22 years; average life of failed post was 16 years.

The double diffusion treatment using copper sulfate and sodium chromate is apparently ineffective in this region.

Brush treatments are not to be encouraged as a general thing but they can add to service life under certain conditions. A two-coat brushing of Douglas-fir posts with penta solution has resulted in 72 percent of the posts standing after 11 years, and tops are sound.

Tests of four types of steel posts indicate no weakness at 12 years.

Stocking Guide for Cattlemen

A decline in calf weaning weights may show that a cattleman's range is being overgrazed, even though cow weights do not change enough to indicate a shortage of forage.

This conclusion comes from a study of beef cattle stocking rates of USDA's Southern Plains Experiment range near Woodward, Oklahoma.

The conclusion is unusual because it's generally thought that cows reflect overgrazing better than their calves—a deteriorating range should lower a cow's weight before her suckling calf is affected.

But the Oklahoma study showed that calf weaning weights varied considerably, depending on the number of acres their dams were allowed to graze. One group was allowed 12 acres per cow. Another group grazed 17 acres per cow, and a third 22 acres. These were 8-year averages. Actual acres per cow varied, depending on pasture conditions.

Stocking rate had little effect on cows. Weaning weights averaged 404 pounds for calves from cows grazing on 12 acres each. Calves from the 17-acre cows weighed 481 and those from cows grazing 22 acres each, 512 pounds.

Calf crop percentages were higher for cows allowed more than 12 acres. Cows on 17 acres average a 92 percent crop; those on 22 acres averaged 89 percent. On the 12 acres-per-cow pasture, fewer calves were produced—an 81 percent crop.

Pastures grazed at 12 acres per cow were severely weakened from overgrazing. Forage production was 912 pounds per acre, while yield from pastures supporting a cow every 22 acres 1,102 pounds.

Use of gauge requires certain conditions.

McIlvain and Shoop think calf weaning weights can be used to help gauge proper stocking under certain conditions. If this method is used, cattle should get all roughage from native range.

Stock should get supplemental protein in winter and salt all year. Grazing intensity within a pasture should also be fairly uniform.

Calf weights won't be useful if much hay is fed regularly. And creep feeding the calves, of course, will keep their weights from indicating range conditions.

Radiation Has Good Side

Radiation is generally thought of as harmful to humans but it has its good side.

It has been used to produce improved varieties of flowers, a barley that will grow and mature inside the Arctic Circle, and an Hibiscus plant that thrives 1,000 miles farther north than the parent plant.

In the experimental stage is a method to prevent sprouting of potatoes and onions to improve their keeping qualities.

Shipping Fever Vaccination

In the fall when cattle are moved from one area to another, either by truck or trailing, they are exposed to stresses and strains. These lower their resistance and frequently the animals suffer from shipping fever—much like a bad cold. This disease, unless halted frequently will turn into pneumonia and cause death.

There are two kinds of material that may be used. Bacterin gives a lasting immunity and needs to be given ten to fourteen days prior to the time the cattle are to be handled. Anti-hemorrhagic

septicemia serum may be given at handling time as an aid in giving immediate immunity.

Grub Control

Cattle grubs are still taking a

heavy toll in the cattle business. Systemics control grubs extremely well provided the operator does a good job in spraying. The internal treatment — Trolene —

will work, although there may be some temporary illness resulting from it. Ruelene may be poured directly on the back of the animal, as long as the skin gets thoroughly wet, the animal will absorb enough of the organic phosphates to control grubs. This has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration Act.

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