

BIOLOGY

Sex Control Method Fails In Test on Farm Animals

SEX CONTROL of unborn offspring by chemical injection, widely hailed a few months ago after the International Eugenics Congress held in New York, failed to work when tried on swine at the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, Madison, Wis. Prof. L. J. Cole and Dr. Ivar Johansson, of the genetics department of the University of Wisconsin, treated 32 brood sows with sodium bicarbonate solution before they were bred, in the manner prescribed by the advocates of the "sex control" method. Another group of sows was left untreated, as a check or "control" on the experiment.

When the litters of pigs were born, it was found that the relative numbers of males and females among them were the same in both groups. This would seem to indicate that the treatment had no effect. The experimenters add the comment, however, that the number of animals treated was relatively small, so that to that extent the negative result is not absolutely conclusive. Their re-

port is given in detail in the current issue of *The Journal of Heredity*.

The method tested in the experiment of Prof. Cole and Dr. Johansson was originated by a German physician, Dr. F. Unterberger of Königsberg. It is based on the belief that an acid condition of the fluids surrounding the germ cells at the time of conception favors the production of female offspring, while an alkaline condition favors the birth of males. To give his clients their wish that the baby might be a boy, Dr. Unterberger prescribed a procedure of internal washing with a weak solution of sodium bicarbonate; and he has published claims that his method has been uniformly successful. The Unterberger method received wide publicity when its use and claimed success were described before the Eugenics Congress by a Dutch scientist, Dr. J. Sanders. The negatively resulting experiments of Drs. Cole and Johansson constituted the first actual test of the method made in this country.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Tests Reveal Students' Attitude Toward Parents

METHODS for measuring the attitudes of children toward their parents were discussed by Dr. Ross Stagner, University of Wisconsin psychologist, in a recent communication to the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The methods described involved the use of short statements about the father or mother, expressing widely different degrees of affection, such as "I feel an intense dislike for my father" or "My father and I get along very well." University students were asked to check the statements which showed how they felt about their parents, and scores were computed on the basis of the answers.

Among the facts reported by Dr. Stagner was a difference found when the same statement was made about both

mother and father. As a rule, the judges thought the "unfavorable" statements were much more unfavorable when made about one's mother. For instance, "My father frequently annoys me" was judged to be only slightly unfavorable; but "my mother frequently annoys me" was judged to be very unfavorable.

Dr. Stagner concluded from this that children have been taught to be much more careful of what they say about their mother, and that mothers have been idealized more than fathers. Girls showed this tendency more than boys.

When the scales made in this manner were given to college freshmen, it was found that boys were slightly more favorable toward both their parents than were girls. The results of the scales agreed closely with other measures of

the way these students felt about their parents.

Dr. Stagner, when asked whether his data supported the Freudian theory that boys are likely to be attracted more to their mothers, and girls to their fathers, answered that some of the facts seemed to support this theory, but that there were many exceptions. He promised further facts on this point in a later report.

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ASTRONOMY

"Harvest Moon" to be Seen Early in October

THE HARVEST MOON, which traditionally aids the farmer by giving him nocturnal illumination at the time he needs it most, will be seen soon. It is the full moon nearest to the autumnal equinox, an event which occurs on September 23.

On Tuesday, October 3, the moon will be full, rising in the east at the same time that the sun is setting in the west. But if you watch it for several evenings before and after this date, you will find that it rises almost as early each night, as on the previous one. On Wednesday it will rise only about 20 minutes later than on Tuesday, instead of an hour or more later, as when the moon is full at other times of year. Thus, moonlit evenings will remain for a longer time after full than in spring, for instance.

The cause of the harvest moon is found in the fact that at this time of year the moon's path, called the ecliptic, is most nearly parallel to the horizon in the evening hours. The moon is moving along this path now as rapidly as at other times of year, but because of the low inclination of the ecliptic, this motion is more effective in shifting it to the south than in getting it farther below the horizon. In the spring, when the ecliptic is nearly perpendicular to the horizon, this motion is most effective in bringing the moon farther below the horizon, resulting in a greater retardation in the daily time of rising.

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A black mallard duck at Fish Point, Michigan, recently was discovered leading a double life; as she had two nests within a few feet of each other which she alternately kept warm, hatching 11 ducklings in one and three in the other.