

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Study Animal Virus Abroad

American scientists will set up study program in Europe to combat foot and mouth disease. Will visit England, Netherlands, Denmark and Switzerland.

► **THREE** U. S. Department of Agriculture veterinarians have sailed for England to set up a new arsenal in the war against foot and mouth disease which has been threatening to invade this country from Mexico.

The scientists, Drs. L. O. Mott, Howard W. Johnson and E. A. Eichhorn, will work at European foot and mouth disease laboratories. They are taking trunkloads of laboratory equipment to conduct experiments in cooperation with European scientists. Other groups from the Department of Agriculture will probably be selected soon for European work.

First stop for the scientists is Pirbright, England, about 30 miles west of London, where Britain has a research center for study of the disease which is threatening America's meat supply. The Department of Agriculture scientists will also visit foot and mouth disease laboratories in the Netherlands, Denmark and Switzerland.

Meanwhile, a U. S. center for research on the disease is in the real estate stage. Congress is considering legislation which would appropriate funds for an island station where experiments could be conducted with diseased animals without danger of spreading the dread virus. Agriculture officials are shopping around for the island.

The new "Alcatraz" for foot and mouth infected animals is expected to be on the East Coast. Several sites near Long Island have been investigated by officials who will decide on the location.

When the island laboratory is set up, scientists expect to concentrate on new and improved vaccines for combatting foot and mouth disease. The new station will be "roughly modeled" on a similar German research center, now in the hands of the Russians.

The German station is on the island of Riems, a couple of miles off the Baltic Coast of Germany near Greifswald. One of the world's foremost authorities on foot and mouth disease, Dr. Otto Waldmann, has directed work on this island for more than two decades. When the U. S. S. R. first occupied the island, which is near the famous rocket experiment station at Peenemunde, the foot and mouth disease laboratory was taken down and removed to Russia. Latest report is that the equipment has been returned to Riems, and that Dr. Waldmann is continuing to direct his work there.

The American scientists in Europe have no plans for visiting the German island, but some Department of Agriculture officials were there before World War II.

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to cause the snowflakes to melt immediately upon contact, leaving dark blue impressions of the crystals. Operating automatically, the instrument exposes the paper to the storm for one minute at 15-minute intervals. This is sufficient to record a storm's history.

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ASTRONOMY

Two Comets Discovered By European Astronomers

► **POLITICAL** events are not the only news from Czechoslovakia. Czech astronomers have discovered a new comet, it was reported by Harvard College Observatory, clearing house for astronomical findings.

The tenth-magnitude comet was spotted from the Skalnaté Pleso observatory in eastern Czechoslovakia. It is called comet Pajdusakova-Mrkos, in honor of the astronomers who made the discovery.

A brighter new comet, of the eighth magnitude and visible through small telescopes, has been reported from the Netherlands and named Comet Keuskamp.

The new discoveries bring the number of new comets spotted thus far in 1948 to four.

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SNOW CRYSTAL RECORDER—
This instrument, which prints on paper the geometric shape, size and frequency of occurrence of snow crystals falling in a storm, is shown being observed by one of the men who developed it—Raymond E. Falconer.

METEOROLOGY

Fingerprint Snow Crystals

► **SNOWFLAKES** falling on a special paper in a new automatic instrument leave a record of their size and shape, how densely together they fell and the number that landed in a given area.

This new snow crystal fingerprinting instrument has practical applications in weather studies. It makes it possible to count the snow crystals in a storm and thus provide information about the numbers of fine nuclei in the atmosphere. These are the fine particles of dust or other material which are necessary to keep a storm active.

Teamed with other devices, the instrument is now being used to help

determine how brightness of the sky and how the flow of electric current from the atmosphere to the ground are affected by a snowstorm.

The snowflake recorder is a development of General Electric, Schenectady, N. Y. The co-developers were Vincent J. Schaefer, the scientist who first made an artificial snowstorm by sprinkling powdered dry ice in a super-cooled cloud from an airplane, together with Raymond E. Falconer and William Kearsley.

The special paper used for recording is coated with water-soluble dye. A small amount of heat is applied to its under surface. This heat is just enough