MEDICINE

Aureomycin Treats Heart

Striking results have been achieved in treating an inflammatory heart condition with aureomycin. The condition is believed to be due to a virus infection.

➤ "STRIKING results" with aureomycin treatment of an inflammatory heart condition are reported by Drs. M. Taubenhaus and William A. Brams of Michael Reese Hospital, Chicago, in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (April 1).

The heart condition is known medically as acute nonspecific pericarditis. It is an inflammation of the membranous sac around the heart and is believed due to a virus infection, though this is not positively known.

Sudden fever, sick feeling and pain below the breast bone or around the heart are symptoms. A "friction rub" can be heard with each heart beat when the doctor listens through his stethoscope.

Striking improvement, with drop in temperature and lessening of pain, took place the second day of treatment with the yellow mold drug, aureomycin. One patient was well within a few days, another was back at full work in two weeks and the third had a relapse after leaving the hospital but got well again after a second course of aureomycin treatment.

While final conclusions cannot be drawn from three cases, Drs. Taubenhaus and Brams think their experience suggests further trial of aureomycin in this heart condition.

Science News Letter, April 8, 1950

AGRICULTURE

Diet Effect on Twin Calves

➤ FROM now on, any cow may become a VIP (very important person) in government circles. All she has to do is have identical twin calves.

If she is within 300 miles of Washington, Department of Agriculture scientists will come knocking at her stall, checkbook in hand, wanting to buy her babies.

The Bureau of Animal Industry has begun a far-reaching research program on the effects of limited food intake on beef cattle. For the experiments, the Bureau's nutrition specialists have begun building a herd of identical twin cows. They hope eventually to secure 24 sets of the relatively rare calves (one set in more than 2,000 births).

Heading the project at the big U. S. Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, Md., is Dr. Clarence F. Winchester.

If it is found that beef cattle can go on short rations for a few months and catch up in poundage later, he explained, "U. S. cattlemen could save a lot of money in times when feed is scarce and exorbitantly priced."

One set of identical twin calves, Dr. Winchester said, can give as accurate data for such experiments as 40 cows that are merely of the same breed and general type. A herd of a dozen twins can do the work of 240 ordinary animals, because scientists can eliminate the factor of different hereditary characteristics when working with exact twins.

One twin will be fed as much as it can eat. The other will be allowed less feed. Differences in growth over various lengths of time will be noted.

Obtaining a set of identical calf twins is not as easy as it sounds. Careful scientific tests are required to make sure of "identity" —that the twins developed from division of a single egg and not from two eggs developed together.

Agriculture Department specialists even take nose prints, like fingerprints, to make sure. Other tests include checking hair patterns, coloring details and blood samples.

To limit travel distances, the government is buying twins only in areas up to 300 miles from Washington. It wants beef calves, but will take dairy calves if sired by a beef bull. The twins do not have to be pure-bred.

Dr. Joseph C. Shaw, professor of animal husbandry at the University of Maryland, is looking for twin dairy calves for nutritional studies. The University used to have a herd of twins, but no more. They were used for slaughter experiments, Dr. Shaw said.

And at the University of Missouri, Dr. Winchester said, Prof. G. E. Dickerson is in the market for female identical calf twins for genetics experiments.

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AERONAUTICS-ENGINEERING

Oil Shale Yields Jet Fuel

➤ BILLIONS of barrels of jet engine fuel, for a possible wartime emergency, can be extracted from the oil shales of Colorado, Dr. J. D. Lankford of the U. S. Bureau of Mines stated.

He estimated that 88% of the crude shale oil could be converted into a hydrogenated product containing a premium diesel oil and a high-quality jet fuel practically free of sulfur, oxygen and nitrogen compounds. Costs of such extractions have not yet been definitely determined, Dr. Lankford told the American Chemical Society meeting in Houston.

Science News Letter, April 8, 1950

WHICH ONE WILL HAVE THE FOOD?—One of these identical twin Angus calves will be mighty jealous of the other for one will be fed all it can eat while the other will go on short rations. Extremely rare, the twins are shown with Dr. Clarence F. Winchester, animal husbandry specialist who is directing the research project.

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