

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Cattle Disease Dangers

► FARMERS' indifference toward a relatively harmless animal disease spreading across southeastern United States this summer could ignite an epidemic of the world's worst cattle disease, SCIENCE SERVICE learned.

Farmers familiar with the damaging but seldom fatal vesicular stomatitis (V.S.) often ignore the symptoms which are identical to those of the deadly foot-and-mouth disease, Dr. Norvan Meyer, chief of the emergency disease eradication section of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said in Washington, D. C. Since these farmers see the symptoms every summer, they would rather overlook the slightly harmful disease than run the risk of quarantine. The disease has been unusually common the past two years. Foot-and-mouth disease is currently hitting the Middle East hard, spreading from Africa into Syria, Israel, Turkey, Jordan and Iran.

Foot-and-mouth disease, although now rare in this country, could break out in herds from coast to coast in a matter of days because of its highly contagious nature. Department officials are always on the lookout for symptoms, continually informing the farmer of the danger of the dread disease, Dr. Meyer said.

Both diseases are characterized chiefly by blisters in the mouth of cloven-hoofed animals, particularly cattle. Tongue tissue often falls off and the victim will not eat. Occasionally vesicles or blisters are also found between and above the claws of the feet.

Experts cannot distinguish between the two sicknesses. All the animals in a herd or area are quickly quarantined by veterinarians and samples of tongue and blood are flown to the central disease laboratory for analysis.

If V.S. is diagnosed, the herd is released. Foot-and-mouth disease, however, requires killing entire herds in quick-lime pits.

Foot-and-mouth disease is common in most parts of the world, Dr. Meyer explained. The U.S., through close enforcement and quarantine, has not had an epidemic since 1929. The ever-present chance that it will reenter the country is great, however, he said. The results could be disastrous.

Vesicular stomatitis is sometimes passed on to people who work closely with infected animals, Dr. Meyer told SCIENCE SERVICE. He admitted that he had had the disease only a few years ago. Human symptoms are fever accompanied by chills, and generally weakness. It lasts a few days.

Since V.S. usually disappears after the first fall frost, Dr. Meyer believes it is transmitted by insects. So far the carrier has not been identified.

With close cooperation between farmers and Government scientists, foot-and-mouth disease can be kept from the country, the scientist said. But close checking of animals with symptoms of vesicular stomatitis must continue to prevent a widespread epidemic from the dread cattle killer.

• Science News Letter, 82:132 September 1, 1962

MEDICINE

Doctors Are Reading—

Need Better Deformity Records

► PRESENT birth certificates are remiss in recording congenital limb deformities, physicians will be reading in the Journal of the American Medical Association 181:590, 1962.

A method for classifying these limb deficiencies, developed by Dr. Ronan O'Rahilly of Wayne University School of Medicine, Detroit, is recommended for use in initial birth records as an aid to necessary research.

Heredity, diet, irradiation, hormones, chemicals and injuries are among the factors responsible for these deformities, Drs. Cameron B. Hall and Milo B. Brooks of the Child Amputee Prosthetics Project, University of California, Los Angeles, reported. They were assisted by Jeannine F. Dennis.

New Poisoning Hazard

Hospital personnel are warned to keep disinfectant out of drinking cups as a result of patients drinking a milky substance that looks like milk of magnesia. Ten cases in which hospitalized patients accidentally swallowed a disinfectant containing hexa-

chlorophene were reported by Drs. Robert Shanahan and Rigdon K. Ratliff of the University of Michigan, and Dr. John B. Wear Jr., now at the University of Wisconsin (p. 587).

Hair Spray May Be O.K.

Reports suggesting that the inhalation of hair sprays can cause a new lung disease called thesaurosis were questioned by a doctor who believes the ailment has been misdiagnosed and is really a chronic infectious disease, pulmonary sarcoidosis (p. 635).

Sarcoidosis is "a great imitator of many diseases," Dr. G. W. H. Schepers of Wilmington, Del., said. "In view of the close . . . similarities between sarcoidosis and certain examples of thesaurosis, the question is raised whether some cases of alleged thesaurosis may be instances of pulmonary sarcoidosis coincidental to exposure to cosmetic hair sprays."

Dr. Schepers is affiliated with the Haskell Laboratory for Toxicology and Industrial Medicine, E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company.

• Science News Letter, 82:132 September 1, 1962

Do You Know?

The human *body* is able to withstand high acceleration crashes provided the body is suitably restrained.

An instrument that provides constant visual and audible *monitoring* of fetal heart beat during and after delivery has been developed.

A *gelatin* material frozen in polyethylene bags to a temperature lower than ice, but not low enough to freeze the fish, is being used to overcome the bulk and melting problems of ice in the air transportation of fish.

• Science News Letter, 82:132 September 1, 1962

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 82 SEPTEMBER 1, 1962 NO. 9

Edited by WATSON DAVIS

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., North 7-2255. Cable Address: SCIENSERVC.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., \$5.50; 2 yrs., \$10.00; 3 yrs., \$14.50; ten or more copies in one package to one address, 7½ cents per copy per week; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage. Change of address: Three weeks notice is required. Please state exactly how magazine is addressed. Include postal zone number.

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Printed in U.S.A. Second class postage paid at Washington, D. C. Established in mimeograph form March 13, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U.S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index. Member of Audit Bureau of Circulation.



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