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TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Broad Street at Montgomery Ave., Phila., Pa.

AGRICULTURE

Tropical Disease of Cattle Gains Foothold in U. S.

CATTLE in portions of the United States, notably in the warmer states in the Southwest and along the Gulf Coast, have been dying from a tropical disease that probably invaded this country years ago but which has only recently been recognized.

Researches on the problem by George W. Stiles, Jr., of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, showed that the ailment is anaplasmosis, a disease prevalent in many of the tropical countries of the world. Cases in this country have been found in the following states; Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, California, Nevada, Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri. It is considered probable that it exists in other states as well.

The symptoms are so much like those of tick fever that cattle afflicted with anaplasmosis have undoubtedly been charged up to the score of the older and better known disease. There is an initial high fever, which does not last long, accompanied by a rapid, tumultuous pulse. The cow "gets poorly," "goes dry," and "loses her cud." There is a great loss of flesh. Severe anemia sets in, the red corpuscle count falling as low as one-eighth normal. Between a third and a half of all cases end in death.

No Danger to Humans

There seems to be no danger to human beings in handling anaplasmodic animals; so far as is known at present the disease attacks only cattle. Researches to date incriminate a number of species of tick as carriers of the infection, and point suspiciously, but without conclusive evidence, at a horse-fly.

The disease is also transmitted in smears of blood on carelessly handled dehorning saws. It is strongly advised that all veterinary instruments be thoroughly cleaned and sterilized between uses on different animals, to eliminate this source of infection.

Anaplasmosis is caused by the attack of a microscopic animal parasite, known as *Anaplasma marginale*. This germ gets into the blood, multiplies, and invades the red corpuscles. In mild cases only one per cent. or so of the corpuscles will show the dark spots that

betray the presence of the parasite, but in severe cases from 25 to 50 per cent. will be affected.

Unfortunately, cattle that have had the disease and recovered continue to harbor the germs in their blood for a long time, thus becoming dangerous "carriers" of the infection.

Science News Letter, May 9, 1931

PUBLIC HEALTH

Health Officials Act On Methanol Regulation

SAFEGUARDING the public health from possible deleterious effects of methanol or wood alcohol used as an anti-freeze in automobile radiators was recommended in a resolution passed by the Conference of State and Territorial Health Officers with the U. S. Public Health Service in Washington. The resolution was based on a report of the committee appointed by Surgeon General Hugh S. Cumming.

The committee feels that the use of methanol should be surrounded by the necessary safeguards through agreement of the Public Health Service with the industry.

"If such an agreement cannot be reached," the report states, "the Surgeon General is requested to inform the several state departments of health of that fact and suggest to them such standard safeguards as he deems necessary for the protection of the public health as a basis for state laws and sanitary regulations."

The safeguards necessary to protect the public health from this new menace will be based on the findings of investigations that are now being conducted by the U. S. Public Health Service.

Methanol or wood alcohol is a poison which may cause blindness and death if taken internally. According to some authorities it is equally poisonous if inhaled or absorbed through the skin. A cheap method of making it synthetically has made it practical for use as an anti-freeze. Public health authorities are now trying to determine how to eliminate the dangers from the wide use of so potent a poison.

Science News Letter, Mar 9, 1931