

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Livestock Disease Menace

Foot-and-mouth disease, that has touched a million Mexican farm animals, can threaten the livestock industries in the United States by crossing the border.

► A MILLION Mexican farm animals, more or less, are either sick of foot-and-mouth disease or have been dangerously exposed to it. About two-thirds of them are cattle; the rest are swine, sheep and goats. This situation not only endangers our neighbor nation's milk and meat supplies; it constitutes a real menace to the whole American livestock industry, even though the point of outbreak nearest to our boundary is still a good 300 miles away. It does not take long for an unchecked plague to travel that far.

For three weeks recently Dr. M. S. Shahan, U. S. Department of Agriculture veterinarian, was in the field with three American and several Mexican colleagues, conducting as complete a survey as possible in the nine Mexican states where the disease exists. They form a zone extending from Veracruz to Mexico City and somewhat beyond, with the plague-stricken areas extending principally along routes where animals are driven or transported.

Separated from this zone by a 150-mile gap is the state of Aguascaliente, where a single outbreak occurred in one village, mainly among work-oxen. This was the point of outbreak nearest American territory. All these animals, they were informed, have now been killed and deeply buried.

In the main zone of infection, little has been done thus far. Mexican agricultural authorities realize the seriousness of the situation, and they know that the one sure means of wiping out the disease is to kill all sick and exposed animals, bury them deeply, and disinfect the premises very thoroughly with strong lye water. But before you can kill off a farmer's livestock you have to compensate him for the loss; also, the disinfecting job isn't cheap. And the Mexicans have no money.

That is what makes the situation our problem as well as theirs. If the outbreak had occurred in this country both federal and state governments could have gone into action at once, with plenty of men and means. There has been an excellent cooperative spirit between the Mexican and American agricultural authorities;

but of course there are a lot of things that have to be decided at higher official levels in both governments. The Secretary of Agriculture has asked Congress for legislation to enable us to cooperate with any American country in combating livestock plagues.

One of the things that the Department of Agriculture has wanted for a long time is a good, strong, tight fence along the very thinly patrolled U. S.-Mexican boundary. It would have to be high enough to prevent deer and antelope from jumping it, stoutly anchored enough to prevent peccaries or wild pigs from burrowing under it, as well as strong and tight enough to stop stray cattle. Stopping interchange of animal populations along the border would do much to prevent the transmission not only of foot-and-mouth disease but of other infections that can be carried by wild as well as domestic animals.

Efforts have been made to find out how this outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease got started in the first place. Strong circumstantial evidence points to the landing of some 300 zebu bulls at Veracruz in 1946. The animals had been brought for breeding purposes from Brazil, where foot-and-mouth disease is known to exist.

Science News Letter, February 22, 1947

ECONOMICS

U. S. Gets Few Machines, Bids for Nazi Plant

► THE UNITED STATES has been allotted "a few machines" from a German optical works and is bidding for a Nazi aluminum foil plant, but the dispute over economic unification of Germany has produced a virtual stalemate in reparations from the great industrial areas of the western occupation zones, State Department sources said.

The machines are from the famous optics plant of Hensoldt and Sons, at Herborn in the American occupation zone. First U. S. reparations granted by the Inter-Allied Reparations Agency, the machines will go to U. S. Navy arsenals. Most of the Hensoldt plant, which pro-



DISEASED COW—This animal is infected with foot-and-mouth disease, hazard to the livestock industry.

duced binoculars famed throughout the world, was allocated to The Netherlands.

The U. S. now has a bid in for the Tschelden aluminum foil plant in the French occupation zone. The bid, based on the demand in this country and the status of American equipment, will be passed on by the Inter-Allied group, which may give all or a part of the plant to the U. S. or allocate the plant entirely to other countries.

Meanwhile, the flow of German military production tools from the huge industrial reservoir of the western occupation zones has dropped to a small trickle. The State Department indicated that the U. S. delegation to the Moscow conference of foreign ministers next month will give high priority to the question holding up distribution of some of the world's most famous scientific and industrial equipment—economic unification of Germany.

Russia wants reparations to proceed before the economic differences are ironed out, but the western powers seek unification of the German economy before parcelling out the approximately 2,000 industrial plants in the western zones earmarked for reparations.

First full picture of the reparations situation in western Germany is expected in the annual report of the Secretary General of the Inter-Allied Reparations Agency. The report will be made later this month.

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