

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Point Four in Reverse

► THE POINT Four program can work both ways: the United States is now receiving technical assistance from veterinarians in South Africa.

When a strange disease struck sheep flocks in California recently, scientists there isolated a virus from sick animals and sent the culture to the Onderstepoort Veterinary Laboratories in Pretoria for identification.

The African laboratory verified the California scientists' suspicions: the disease was the dreaded blue tongue sickness, cause of enormous sheep losses in South Africa for about 80 years. The disease is almost unknown outside of Africa.

Dr. R. A. Alexander, expert on blue tongue and director of the Union of South Africa's Veterinary Services, is now in the United States at the request of the Department of Agriculture to help plan the battle against the disease.

While most of Dr. Alexander's work here will be done in California with the infected flocks, he hopes to visit Texas and Utah, where sheep diseases with symptoms

similar to those of blue tongue have been reported.

In Africa, blue tongue is spread by a species of sandfly which harbors the virus. As infections among California sheep decreased with the coming of cold weather, agriculture scientists believe the disease is probably insect-borne in this country too. No active control measures have been taken against blue tongue in the United States yet because of lack of knowledge about it. Dr. Alexander's report of his findings will signal the beginning of the battle.

A vaccine against blue tongue has recently been put into use in Africa. However, a news report from Johannesburg said more than a million sheep have died already this year from the disease.

Blue tongue symptoms show up first in the mouth and mucous membranes of infected animals, causing ulceration and cyanosis. The sheep become emaciated, lame, and the wool is poor. Abortions are frequent. Mortality in infected flocks varies, but generally runs about 10% to 20%.

Science News Letter, May 9, 1953

INVENTION

Expanding Coat Invention

► SPRING FASHIONS have hit the U. S. Patent Office as inventive genius turned out an expandable coat that holds two persons, a necktie with interchangeable parts and an adjustable skirt.

The expandable coat, invented by Howard C. Ross of Arlington, Va., is designed to be worn as a topcoat or raincoat. The inventor says it should be handy "in emergencies" when the wearer and his girl friend, for instance, get caught in the rain at a football game.

When that happens, the wearer merely expands the coat and both he and the girl friend scramble inside it. Each person is allotted one sleeve.

The coat has built-in "folding panels" of cloth that are snapped out of the way for normal use of the coat by one person. Two panels are doubled under on the front side, and a zipper arrangement in the rear takes care of the back panels.

The expandable coat was assigned patent No. 2,636,176.

Robert J. Corey of Brooklyn, N. Y., received patent 2,636,178 for his preformed necktie. The neckband, knot and drape portions of the tie are all interchangeable.

The knot is a preformed shell of metal, plastic, bone or any other suitable material. It is molded to resemble a perfect four-in-hand. The knot can be covered with matching or contrasting cloth, or left bare.

The drape material clamps into the knot. The knot holds the drape so that it "styl-

ishly curls and dimples" the drape portion, the inventor says. A cloth neckband holds the assembly around the wearer's neck. On hot days when collars ordinarily are loosened, the neckband can be loosened easily also.

Ethel E. and Jean E. Gillespie of Portland, Ore., had that expanding waistline in mind when they created their adjustable skirt, patent No. 2,636,180.

The idea is to provide skirts and slacks that do not have to be taken to a skilled seamstress to be enlarged. Ordinarily to let out a garment requires that the seamstitching be removed. Then the garment must be sewed back together. This takes time and sometimes requires the services of a professional seamstress.

To get around the problem, the inventors created a skirt with rows of stitching instead of single seams. To let the skirt out a notch, the wearer merely cuts the first row of stitching with a razor blade. If this does not enlarge the skirt or slacks enough, then the remaining rows can be cut until the garment fits. This can be done quickly, even by the rankest of amateurs, the inventors believe.

The waistband has snaps spaced along it so that it works properly when the skirt is let out.

Science News Letter, May 9, 1953

A second British-controlled rocket range has been opened in Australia.

Questions

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