

AGRICULTURE

Kansas Imports Show New Sheep Disease

➤ A SHEEP disease, never before reported in North America, has been found in the blood of animals shipped to Kansas from Wyoming, Colorado and Montana.

Conclusively identified as "anaplasma ovis," treatment of the disease has not been attempted as it is not fatal in sheep. A similar strain, however, is fatal to cattle, but scientists state that the sheep disease is not transmissible to cattle.

The disease, identified by Dr. Earl J. Splitter, a pathologist at Kansas State College's School of Medicine, has been found before in the sheep of Mediterranean countries. Dr. Splitter said that the strain found in American sheep for the first time will probably be susceptible to the same treatment as the organism found in cattle.

Science News Letter, June 18, 1955

OCEANOGRAPHY

Three-Peaked Mountain Discovered in Atlantic

➤ A THREE-PEAKED mountain has been discovered rising from the Atlantic Ocean's floor near Bermuda, two scientists from Lamont Geological Observatory, Palisades, N. Y., have reported.

Found during a cruise of the United States submarine USS Toro, the third peak is named Toro Seamount. With the double-peaked Seamount George, it forms an L-shaped mountain with a broad face at least ten miles in length toward Bermuda.

Toro Seamount's peak is 5,880 feet below the ocean surface, Drs. J. Lamar Worzel and G. Lynn Shurbet observed. It towers 1,380 feet over Seamount George, discovered by Drs. John Northrop and Robert A. Frosch of Columbia University's Hudson Laboratories.

The peaks are conical, probably resulting from extinct volcanoes erupting within the last 50,000,000 years. Echo-sounding equipment was used to locate Toro Seamount, Drs. Worzel and Shurbet report in the *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America* (April).

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Wildcats

➤ THE TWO principal members of the cat family that run wild in this country are the lynx, variously known as wildcat and bobcat, and the larger animal called in various regions cougar, puma, mountain lion, panther and painter—the last name being a corruption of panther.

Up in Canada, and coming down occasionally into the northern border country, is a second species of lynx, larger and more formidable than the common wildcat. Many naturalists subdivide the lynx genus into a larger number of species.

Though smaller than the cougar, the lynxes look meaner and are meaner by na-

ture. Their rough fur and their suggestion of a leonine mane give them a really formidable appearance, and hunting dogs are wise when they avoid too rash an attack on a bayed lynx.

For all his hard-fighting disposition, the lynx or wildcat does not raid farmyards except in wild country, when he may occasionally help himself to the poultry.

The cougar or mountain lion, however, though less courageous than the lynxes, is a much more formidable killer of domestic as well as wild animals, and is heartily hated by all western stock men and by the government rangers who have custodianship of the game herds in the national parks and forests.

He has learned, too, that he is remorselessly hunted, which has made him wary about returning to a kill for a second meal, so that the cougars now left unkilld are more destructive than ever.

Cougars have an intense curiosity about man and his works. Frequently one will lie motionless on a tree or rock overhanging a road while his enemy, the hunter, passes below. The blood-curdling tales of man-killing cougars, however, have to date gone wholly without confirmation. Those who know them best state that they are, on the contrary, most arrant cowards.

Neither the cougars nor the lynxes are often seen in our great western parks, although evidences of their presence are sometimes found. While complete extermination of members of the wildcat family is not desirable, any great abundance of them should be discouraged.

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MEDICINE

Protons Treat Cancer

➤ PROTONS, THE cores or hearts of hydrogen atoms, have now been used with good results in treating 14 patients with advanced cancer of the breast, Dr. John H. Lawrence, director of the Donner Laboratory of Medical Physics at Berkeley, Calif., announced at the meeting of the American Medical Association in Atlantic City, N. J.

The protons were beamed from the synchrocyclotron, a super atom smasher. This proton beam, unlike X-rays or gamma rays from radium, does not scatter. It remains narrow and can therefore be used for pinpoint irradiation of very small targets deep within the body. A further advantage is that its dose becomes four times more powerful within the body than at the surface.

The cancer patients had the proton beam directed at their pituitary glands deep within their heads. The object of the treatment was to depress gland functions that might have stimulated the cancer's spread.

All 14 patients treated so far showed the hoped-for changes, though they had previously not improved under other kinds of treatment.

"Whether or not there will be a practical

application of this beam in therapy of cancer or other conditions by this form of selective irradiation cannot be estimated until we have had an opportunity to observe these patients for another two or three years," Dr. Lawrence said.

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MEDICINE

Set Up Agency to Test Anti-Rheumatic Drugs

➤ A NEW agency for testing drugs reported to have anti-rheumatic effects has been organized under the auspices of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation.

It will be known as CENTA, the initials of Committee for Evaluation of New Therapeutic Agents. Dr. John Lansbury, Philadelphia, chairman, said that 26 arthritis clinics in 12 states have already agreed to take part in the work of CENTA.

Plans and steps already taken were described by Dr. Lansbury at the meeting of the American Rheumatism Association in Atlantic City, N. J.

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