

Exportation losses lower

Cattle death toll cut

The high death toll which claims about half of the cattle exported from the United States to Central and South America can now be greatly reduced with a new pre-immunization procedure developed at the Institute of Tropical Veterinary Medicine in the battle against Texas tick fever and anaplasmosis.

"We have seen death losses running 40 percent or higher and in countries where these diseases are prevalent reduced to as few as one or two percent," explained Dr. Gilberto S. Trevino, director of the Institute located on Texas A&M University campus.

The concept is the injection of virulent organisms of tick fever or anaplasmosis, or both, into beef or dairy cattle about three weeks before shipment from the United States. These animals develop a mild case of the disease, or diseases, and after reaching their destination where the diseases are prevalent, a challenge by a vector is unsuccessful.

"This same procedure for immunization is not applicable to cattle which remain in the United States," Dr. Trevino assured, "because pre-immunization makes these cattle carriers of the diseases."

Dr. Trevino, a former veterinarian with the U.S. Army, said that Mexico is teaming with the diseases.

Although Texas generally eradicated tick fever, ticks are rearing their ugly heads to cause another threat of fever. The fever threatened to put the cattle industry

out of business some 40 or 50 years ago. It was brought under control through mandatory dipping that triggered much strife between cattlemen and health officials, including dynamiting of some dipping vats.

Anaplasmosis is transmitted by ticks and other biting arthropods and aggressive blood-sucker type flies. Both diseases are caused by (single cell) protozoa which get into the bloodstream and destroy blood cells.

"I'll guarantee that 40 or 50 out of every shipment of 100 animals will die from babesiosis or anaplasmosis after they reach their destination in Central or South America, if the animals are not protected," said Trevino. "If a buyer pays, say \$1,000 per animal, and breeding bulls are generally much higher, this means that he would lose \$40,000 to \$50,000 before getting a pound of beef or a gallon of milk for his investment."

Dr. Trevino said that the pre-immunization costs \$50 per animal, meaning an addition of \$5,000, but would reduce losses to one or maybe two animals, or \$1,050 or \$2,100 on a \$105,000 pre-immunized investment.

Texas cattlemen sold in excess of one-third of the 25,978 cattle which moved through the state's export facilities in 1977, according to Dr. H.Q. Sibley, executive director of the Texas Animal Health Commission. Total livestock sales, including horses and other animals, was \$50,466 during 1977.

Dr. Trevino cited the case of dairymen in Colombia who had 500 head pre-immunized with no deaths reported.

To prepare for immunization Dr. Trevino and his staff remove the spleen from a calf under anesthesia. After the calf recovers, virulent organisms of babesiosis or anaplasmosis are injected into the jugular vein.

The animal is observed closely for packed-cell volume, body temperature and parasitemia. When the latter peaks at 18 to 21 days, blood is harvested for laboratory preparation and infection into animals to be exported.

Dr. Trevino said that shipments of animals should be concentrated before and after the injections in specific tick-free facilities, such as the one in Houston.

"About four weeks is required from injection for the animal to develop enough antibodies to give protection when arriving in a country where these diseases are prevalent," said Trevino. "These are injections for either or both the diseases."

Institute veterinarians will travel to any location where the pre-immunization is to be administered to cattle.

Dr. Trevino said that many years will be required for development and training of people in private enterprise to apply this system of immunization, thereby reducing costs. Currently it is economically wise to pay \$50 per head for the pre-immunization.

Officials recruiting farmers

United Press International

City and county officials are trying to find foster farmers for about 200 chickens.

The only requirements are that the chickens remain unneaten for at least a year and that weekly samples of blood be sent to the

Dallas County health office.

As an incentive, each farmer will also receive \$1 and 100 pounds of free chicken feed for each bird accepted.

The chickens are part of a countywide health project to determine whether encephalitis-carrying mosquitoes are in the

area.

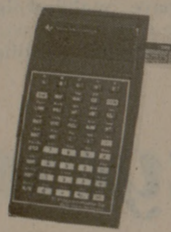
"I don't know why but we usually detect encephalitis in chickens before anyone gets it," said county health officer Dr. Allen Fain.

The chickens do not become ill from the encephalitis — a disease affecting the nervous system

— since they develop antibodies. And it's the presence of these antibodies in the chicken blood which alerts health officials to the presence of encephalitis in the area.

Once alerted, a mosquito spraying program could be put in immediate effect.

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Dr. Gilbert S. Trevino and his staff at the Institute of Tropical Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University have developed a pre-immunization for Texas fever tick and

anaplasmosis. This method will bring cattle death toll losses down to one or two percent in the United State's exportation to Central and South American countries, Trevino says.

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