

National

Insurance habits examined

Rural, young least insured

United Press International
WASHINGTON — About 26.6 million Americans, 12.6 percent

of the civilian population, have no health insurance, a study by the Department of Health and Hu-

man Services says.

The 12-month incomplete study, which examined the habits and insurance coverage of more than 37,000 people in 1977 and 1978, said non-whites, young adults and rural residents are among the least insured people in the United States.

The study found that about 29.9 percent of those aged 18 to 24 were uninsured. And there were large racial differences — 12 percent of whites uninsured compared to 18 percent of all other races.

The study also found city dwellers were more likely to be insured than rural residents, and those with more years of education were more likely to be insured.

Although final results will not be available for several years, the preliminary findings also said:

—In 1977, the mean charge for a doctor's visit was \$21.29, with more than two-thirds of it paid by insurance. Costs were higher for city dwellers than rural residents.

— Highest charges for doctor's

office visits in 1977 were in the West, with a mean charge of \$28.01. North Central residents paid \$18.08, Northeast residents \$21.02 and southerners \$20.39.

—Dental visits in 1977 cost an average \$31.71. The patient and family paid 77 percent of the charge, but the percentage has probably gone down since recent statistics show 21 percent of Americans had dental insurance last year.

—About 88.3 percent of U.S. employees work for firms that offer some form of health insurance, but the type varies widely. Larger firms with union contracts are more likely to offer plans and assume a greater share of the cost.

The study's authors said this information and the information that will come later, will help answer questions about costs of various types of health insurance, demand for medical services, problems in obtaining medical care, and steps that can be taken to curb soaring medical costs.

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Entrepreneur finances search for dinosaur

United Press International
PLANO — Jack Bryan's eyes sparkle with childlike excitement when he talks about financing an expedition deep into the Congo to find a living dinosaur.

Bryan, whose fascination with dinosaurs stretches back to his childhood, said an article about a Chicago scientist investigating reports of a dinosaur living among African tribes hit him "right between the eyes."

He said: "I've been interested in dinosaurs since I was a kid. I made clay models and read a lot about them."

Bryan, 54, a consulting engineer turned entrepreneur, said he took the first plane to Chicago after hearing that news and had lunch with Dr. Roy P. Mackal, the scientist who was investigating the reports and whose next search for the crea-

ture lacked financing. Mackal is a biochemist who spent 12 years searching for the Loch Ness monster and has taken four trips to Africa in search of the dinosaur.

Bryan agreed to back the dinosaur-searching expedition, and helped convince the National Geographic Society to also help finance the trip.

Bryan said Mackal, a photographer, two other scientists, a missionary-translator and about 20 Pygmy porters were expected to have reached Lake Tele this week. Bryan said he was unable to go on the mission because of a problem with immunization shots.

The large reptile, said to resemble a brontosaurus, is said to inhabit a remote, swampy jungle near Lake Tele in the Congo.

Mackal said natives call the

beast "mokele-mbembe" and eyewitnesses described it as being 36 feet long, reddish brown and standing between 10 and 10 feet tall. It is described as having a long, flexible neck, thick, tapering tail, and stubby legs. It feeds on water-flowered plants with an apple-like fruit that grow on the banks, observers say.

The natives said depicted a brontosaurus resemble creature. The brontosaurus believed to have become extinct 70 million years ago.

"We've got a piece of ground that has not changed in 70 million years," Bryan said. "The plant life is the same, there have been no volcanoes, floods or other things that would have changed it. If (Arthur) Conan Doyle's 'The Lost World' is this is where it is."

Cow patties mean power farmer, Cornwell prof say

United Press International
ITHACA, N.Y. — Cornell University Professor Dr. William Jewell and horse farmer Harry Buck have come up with ways to make a farm energy self-sufficient by using cow manure. Both say any farmer can do it — but won't.

"There's an awful lot of interest in this area but there's a great reluctance to move, because farmers are waiting to see practical proof," Jewell said. "They're waiting to see if people other than Cornell University professors can run this system."

Buck said: "Farmers always say, 'Show me.' The only time when they do something is when their backs are to the wall, and they can't afford to pay for anything."

Cornell researchers have developed a methane gas generation system to help dairy and beef cattle farmers turn animal manure into fuel. The process also removes 90 percent of the odor from the waste material.

Using an insulated, earthen trench with a flexible, specially-made impenetrable cover and an underground hotwater heater, Cornell scientists have developed a system that produces a mixture of methane and carbon dioxide.

This fuel can be used to heat farm homes and buildings, produce hot water for milking equipment, cool milk, dry crops, run power generators and fuel mobile units within a confined area, the researchers said.

If the trench, which must be kept at 95 degrees, is well insulated, the gas produced from the manure of 50 dairy cows — about 5,300 pounds of manure — should be enough to heat a modern home during a winter, the researchers said. The gas could be burned instead of fuel oil or propane gas, they said.

Although Cornell has successfully tested its demonstration system for the last three winters, Buck built a system of his own. He did research on the subject and utilized his knowledge gained as a mechanical engineer.

"During the oil embargo of 1973 I had to go begging for gas to run my tractor," said Buck, a 59-year-old Austrian immigrant. "I promised myself I would never do that again."

With the help of his family and neighbors, he designed and built a methane gas generation system from scratch at his Whinney-Haw stables.

After writing to various parts of

the world for information, he started the project in 1977 and finished three years later.

In use since last year, Buck's system, which produces an equivalent of 20 barrels of oil a day, will save him thousands of dollars a year and result in an output of about 800 barrels a year.

He claims his farm is energy independent, except for electricity worth of heating oil and gas. He must purchase annually an ethanol-producing system at full operation. The system held up in a legal dispute with his local zoning board.

Buck said manure might also be sold as fertilizer. His process ethanol and methane would be put on the market for sale.

Buck uses the methane generated from the manure of his 25 horses and his neighbors' cows to run an internal combustion engine, which powers an alternator and produces electricity. The electricity heats his house and greenhouse, makes steam to power a still the ethanol production.

Like Cornell's, his system serves the nutrients in the waste so little fertilizer is lost.

Jewell, who directed the trench project, said methane generation systems are feasible even small-scale dairy and cattle farmers. He said dairy with 50 to 100 head of cows should seriously consider one installed.

"But until we have 1,000 farms operating in the United States, I really don't know the future is for this system," Jewell said. "I think there would find it would yield the lowest cost and cleanest available."

"I feel it's effective down to the lowest-size farms." Farmers would have to invest a minimum of \$10,000 for the system, he said.

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