



FROM WILBUR LANTZ, GREENFIELD, INDIANA

"I farm 584 acres in partnership with my brother, Gerald. This includes 160 acres owned by our father. We buy 120 to 130 head of 500-pound steer calves a year, fed to high-good or low-choice grade. In addition, we have been raising 2,000 head of hogs a year. On this farm both cattle and hogs get high moisture corn fed from a Harvestore. Corn is fed whole to hogs through a system of small augers connecting the silo with self feeders. We grind the corn for cattle as it comes out of storage.

"Our cropping program includes 275 acres of corn, 150 acres of soybeans and 75 acres of wheat under present allotments. In addition, we graze sheep on 80 acres of pasture land. Some of our fields have been growing corn continuously for the past 14 years with improvement in yields over this period.

"My problems are:

"Virus pneumonia is cutting the profit out of our hog business. We are thinking of selling off every hog on the place, waiting six weeks and then starting over with clean breeding stock. Which would likely be the more profitable move: (1) to buy eight weeks old SPF gilts at \$50 a head, or take our own sows to the SPF Lab for delivery at \$60 a sow and sacrifice the sow and the boar pigs; or (2) to shop for gilts farrowed and reared normally in a clean herd? We have heard a lot about lack of immunity in SPF pigs. To what extent is this true, and how serious?

"We have been implanting Stilbestrol in our cattle on feed, using three pellets in the ear every five months. Would we get better results, or cut costs, by including Stilbestrol in the feed instead?"

MORRISON:

Mr. Lantz you have several important questions which will be answered in the order raised.

1) In my opinion the decision of whether or not to take your own sows or gilts to the SPF lab or buy 8-week old gilts from the lab depends almost entirely upon two factors: (a) The quality and type of your own sows and gilts as far as farrowing and weaning performance is concerned from a strict breeding standpoint. Of course, this may be quite difficult to determine if virus pneumonia has been bad on your farm. Perhaps some indication may be ascertained by going back over the records for several years, (b) The quality and type of sows being bought by the SPF lab for producing the gilts offered for sale. Unfortunately, many SPF labs have not really paid much attention to this important point and have only met

rather mediocre standards of production which can rather easily be secured by the normal efficient hog operator. It would be highly desirable for more labs to use only performance tested sows in conjunction with SPF pigs. If you feel that the quality of your pigs is equal to that of the lab, I would personally take the sows to the lab for delivery and sacrifice the sow and boar pigs.

2) Since your primary concern is virus pig pneumonia, I would go the SPF route rather than attempting to purchase pigs from "clean herds".

3) In regards to the lack of immunity of SPF pigs we must understand what the SPF program accomplishes. The SPF program is aimed at the elimination of viruses, particularly virus pig pneumonia and atrophic rhinitis. It will not eli-

minate microorganism or diseases still prevalent on the farm. A proper immunization program must be followed with these pigs for hog cholera, swine erysipelas, brucellosis, and leptospirosis, etc. The SPF program is no shortcut in management and no solution to the problems of raising and selling better pork. Care must be taken to keep the premises disease-free as possible by restricting movement of trucks, visitors, varmints, etc. If this is done, "disease free" pigs do as well and often quite a bit better than other good hogs, particularly in terms of daily gain and feed efficiency. Proper programs are also necessary for both internal and external parasite control in SPF hogs.

4) The implanting method is cheaper to use than the in-the-feed method of using stilbes-

trol. This is particularly true if you are well set-up to handle the cattle with a minimum amount of fuss and if you do your own work. One disadvantage of the implant method, however, is the fact that you cannot "unplant" implanted cattle. Thus, if certain individuals have high tail heads or "ride" other cattle, or otherwise show side effects little can be done other than to remove them from the lot so they will not annoy the rest. On the other hand, within-the-feed stilbestrol it is either possible to reduce the usage level or else withdraw it entirely from the ration.

I personally recommend about a 24 mg. implant of stilbestrol for fattening cattle with somewhat less for heifers. I do not recommend reimplanting until at least 6 months time has elapsed.

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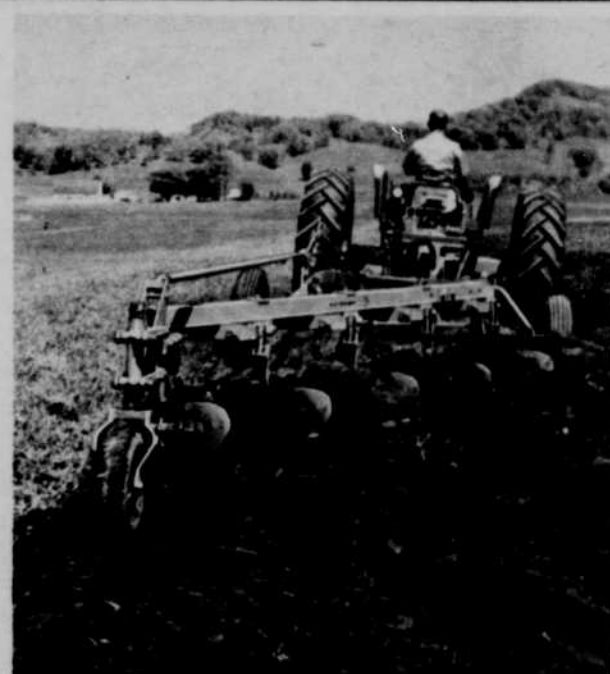
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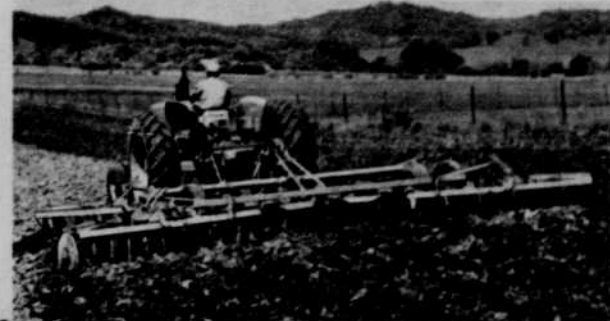
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