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Current Information Letter

For the Information of County Extension Agents and Extension Workers Only
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION DIVISION—PAUL E. MILLER, DIRECTOR
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FILE UNDER: ANIMAL HUSBANDRY — Animal Disease

Bang's Disease --- Summary of Regulations of Minnesota Livestock Sanitary Board
-- W. A. Billings, Extension Veterinarian.

A FEW THINGS EVERY WELL INFORMED COUNTY AGENT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT
BANG'S DISEASE. BY THE WAY, THE NEW NAME IS BRUCELLOSIS.

You are familiar with the main facts about Bang's disease. Armed with this knowledge, most of you have been pretty well sold on the idea there is no cure for it and have been recommending that farmers have their herds tested and then sell the reactors. This is popularly called the "test and slaughter" method. Up to now, this has been the official control plan sponsored by our State Livestock Sanitary Board.

Things were going along nicely until a few months back when you heard and read a good deal about CALFHOOD VACCINATION. Some of these articles, mostly written by laymen, read like fairy tales and a reader might be forgiven for waxing enthusiastic. If you read any of them you may have wondered why the test and slaughter method was not abandoned in favor of the vaccination program. Just to keep the record straight, I would like to boil down the recent releases which you have received from the Sanitary Board. You will find the Board actually does permit calfhood vaccination, but the procedure is a lot more complicated than the magazine articles lead you to believe.

FIRST LET US CONSIDER THE VARIOUS WAYS A FARMER MAY HANDLE A HERD
AFFECTED WITH BANG'S DISEASE. HE HAS HIS CHOICE OF FOUR METHODS.

- FIRST He may do NOTHING at all (many do) or he may resort to using some patent medicine. This is the same as nothing.
- SECOND He may decide the county-wide area test plan is best and use his influence to cause a petition to be circulated among the farmers in the county. This is carried on in much the same way as the petition procedure used in the recent T.B. work. You may not know it but 20 counties have ALREADY been tested on the area basis and thirteen have become Certified or accredited as Bang's disease free. More of this later.
- OR HE MAY DESIRE SIMPLY TO HAVE HIS CALVES VACCINATED AS IN THIS NEXT PLAN.
- THIRD This method provides for calfhood vaccination BUT the owner does not wish to sign up for a CERTIFIED HERD. He may fear there are too many rules and regulations. He must, however, sign the CALFHOOD VACCINATION agreement.
- OR HE MAY DECIDE TO TRY FOR A CERTIFIED BANG'S DISEASE FREE HERD, WITH OR WITHOUT CALFHOOD VACCINATION.
- FOURTH This plan is much like the old accredited agreement EXCEPT the owner MAY (if he wishes) include calfhood vaccination subject to the rules described later.

These are the FOUR possibilities. Let's take each in turn and try to give you the high spots. For obvious reasons, we won't describe the FIRST method.

METHOD NO. 2

THE COUNTY-WIDE AREA TEST PLAN

Most of you are familiar with the provisions governing the county-wide area test. A petition must be circulated and 70 per cent of the cattle owners must sign up as favoring the testing of ALL the cattle in the county according to rules and regulations laid down by State and Federal authorities. When this is done, county and state officers are empowered to take the necessary steps to carry out the terms of the agreement.

Up to the present time 20 counties have signed up under this plan and believe it or not thirteen of these are NOW "Certified Bang's Disease Free" counties. These accredited counties are as follows:

Roseau	Hubbard
Pennington	Itasca
Red Lake	Clearwater
Marshall	Koochiching
Polk	Mahnomen
Lake of the Woods	Lake
Beltrami	

The following seven counties are now in the process of testing for certification.

St. Louis	Norman
Carlton	Cook
Wilkin	Cass
Watonwan	

The following counties are on the waiting list. They are all signed up and ready for testing to begin. Others are being added from time to time.

Crow Wing
Clay

From the above you will note the splendid progress made in LESS THAN TWO YEARS. When considering the advisability of undertaking the county-wide area test, one should remember that in ALL PROBABILITY at least 70 per cent of ALL the herds in the county will come CLEAN on the very FIRST test. In some counties it has been much higher than this. Counties in southern Minnesota of course run higher than those in the north section, but even in a county such as Watonwan, the herd infection was only about 22 per cent. In other words, in most counties less than 30 per cent of the herds would yield any reactors at all.

We hear a lot about the so-called "problem" herds. These no doubt occur, but they are not nearly as numerous as generally suggested. I am told by an official conducting the test that up to now there are not more than 25 of these problem herds in all counties combined.

From the above line-up of counties, certified and in the process of being certified, I think the men in charge of this program have done a fine job.

Minnesota has a fine record for disease control. The area plan of course is designed for the eventual ERADICATION of Bang's disease. T.B. has been whipped and it would appear that we are well on the way toward the eradication of Bang's.

KEEP IN MIND THAT THE ABOVE AREA TEST PLAN DOES NOT ADVISE THE VACCINATION OF CATTLE. ITS AIM IS COMPLETE ERADICATION BY THE SHORTEST ROUTE.

METHOD NO. 3

This plan is designed for the farmer who is NOT in an area tested county and who merely wants to vaccinate his calves. He is NOT a candidate for an accredited or what is more properly called a "certified" herd. He MUST, however, sign a CALFHOOD VACCINATION agreement with the State Livestock Sanitary Board and agree to the following provisions:

Farmers and cattlemen generally have had the notion that they can go to the drug store, buy the vaccine and do the job themselves. THIS IS NOT TRUE. It may have been done, but druggists and others cannot legally sell the vaccine to others than licensed veterinarians. More on this later.

Under this plan then, the following steps are necessary:

- (1) The owner signs the calthood vaccination agreement and then consults his local veterinarian. The veterinarian himself MUST then secure from the Sanitary Board a PERMIT to vaccinate other herds.
- (2) Before ANY vaccination is done, the ENTIRE herd must be tested at the OWNER'S expense.
- (3) Reactors (if any) are now tagged and branded. They do not HAVE to be sold but must be quarantined. Should the owner decide to get rid of one or all of these reactors, then or later, he must secure a PERMIT from the Board and they must be sold for SLAUGHTER only.
- (4) Under the terms of this plan, NO INDEMNITIES are paid the owner.
- (5) After the first herd test, the calves may be vaccinated. Calves from 4 to 8 months old ONLY may be vaccinated. Older cattle must NOT be vaccinated.
- (6) Thirty days after the calves have been vaccinated, they SHOULD (they don't have to be) be retested at the OWNER'S expense. Those calves NOT reacting at this time SHOULD at once be re-vaccinated. Also at the OWNER'S expense.
- (7) Now then, when the vaccinated calves reach BREEDING age, they SHOULD again be tested. If any of the vaccinated calves react AT THIS TIME, they are promptly tagged and branded. They SHOULD be removed from the herd for some of these may react the rest of their lives. These reacting animals may be sold for SLAUGHTER only.

REMARKS:

You will gather from the above, this plan involves considerable expense to the owner. He pays all vaccinating and testing expenses and is not entitled to indemnities. The signing of this CALFHOOD AGREEMENT does not make the owner in line for a certified herd. To do that he MUST sign the certified agreement.

Another sticker in this plan, is the fact that an owner may vaccinate for a couple of seasons and then decide to quit.

METHOD NO. 4

This plan is somewhat the same as No. 3 EXCEPT the owner signs the CERTIFIED owner's agreement and obligates himself to follow certain rules and regulations. Instead of saying he "should" do this and that, we now say he "must" comply with the following steps. He may or may not include calfhood vaccination in this plan.

- (1) He must sign the owner's CERTIFIED agreement.
- (2) He MUST place his herd under the supervision of the Sanitary Board.
- (3) No cattle shall have been vaccinated less than 18 months prior to the initial testing of the herd.
- (4) The entire herd MUST first be tested. All reactors MUST be tagged and branded and sent to immediate slaughter. Regulation indemnities ARE paid for all condemned animals.

NOW THEN..if the owner decides to INCLUDE calfhood vaccination, he must comply as follows:

- (5) Only calves from 4 to 8 months of age shall be vaccinated.
- (6) All testing and vaccinating shall be done at the OWNER'S expense. Under some circumstances there may be exception to this rule.
- (7) Thirty days after calves are first vaccinated, they MUST be retested. Such calves as fail to react at this time must be re-vaccinated.
- (8) All vaccinated animals shall NOT be bred or allowed to mingle with the rest of the herd UNTIL they have passed a NEGATIVE test. All testing and retesting, etc., is done at the OWNER'S expense.
- (9) A certified Bang's disease free herd CERTIFICATE is granted when NO reactors are found after THREE complete herd tests at least 6 months apart. This applies to ALL cattle in the herd 6 months or more old.
- (10) Retests of herds in which reactors or suspects ARE found shall be made 30 to 90 days after the last test.
- (11) After a herd becomes certified it MUST be tested annually at the OWNER'S expense.
- (12) In ALL herds where calfhood vaccination is being practiced, ALL calves must be tested immediately BEFORE vaccinating and again 30 days following vaccination. If they do NOT react, they must be re-vaccinated provided they are not older than 8 months.
- (13) Cattle from OTHER CERTIFIED herds may be added to a herd which is in the process of being certified without test.
- (14) A Certified Bang's Disease Free Herd certificate will be issued to the owner whose herd is deemed clean (see paragraph 9). This certificate is valid for ONE year.

REMARKS:

Certain "figurers" have estimated that if an owner stuck closely to this plan and did everything according to rules, it would be approximately 7 to 9 years before he had a completely NEW herd in which ALL the animals were immune. This is assuming the vaccination of the calves is 100 per cent effective. It would seem from the foregoing explanations that in the AREA TEST ALONE does the farmer get his testing done free. Also ONLY in the area test and in certified testing is the owner eligible for indemnity.

For further information on indemnities see paragraph 4 of the Owner's Agreement B.D.28.

WHO PAYS FOR TESTING, vaccinating, etc.? This contract specifically says in section 6 of the Owner's Agreement that vaccination of calves and application of all preliminary tests be at the expense of the owner. In section 16 it says the necessary tests for CERTIFICATION of the herd shall be borne by Sanitary Board IF funds are available. In actual practice, the chances are that the owner will in most cases pay the bill.

THE VACCINE

Regulations for its use

- (1) This is a LIVE vaccine. It is made only in laboratories licensed by the government and is made according to strict federal regulations.
- (2) Druggists and biological houses may sell the vaccine to LICENSED veterinarians ONLY. Both the dealer and the veterinarian using the vaccine must report its sale and subsequent use to the State Livestock Sanitary Board.
- (3) It is illegal to sell this vaccine to farmers.
- (4) This vaccine being alive, is therefore perishable. Consequently, it must be kept in careful refrigeration as prescribed by the Board. If this is not done it may be rendered valueless.
- (5) Dealers and others found guilty of selling this vaccine to others than legal users are subject to fine and imprisonment.