

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SCIENCE AND EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR
EXTENSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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SUBJECT: Awareness Program--Toxic Contaminants, Food and Feed

TO: Dr. Cheryl Knobloch
FDA-BVM

Extension has a long history of providing timely information and technical information to farmers and others regarding toxic contaminants. This awareness information dissemination is carried out through direct contact, meetings, newsletters, fact sheets, newspapers, and electronic media.

Examples of areas addressed include: use of approved pesticides, approved drugs, animal waste management, and accidental chemical exposures. The latter includes chemicals such as PCB's, PCP, and PBB.

In the case of PCB's, Extension provided information to the dairy industry when it was learned that silo sealants (aroclor's) were responsible for producing PCB residues via silage fed to dairy and beef cattle. Comparable information was provided to the poultry industry when episodes of PCB contamination occurred in rendered meat products used in poultry rations. Producers were encouraged to purchase feeds only from firms that would certify that such feeds were free from contamination.

Prior to PCB's, Extension provided information to farmers advising against the use of used crankcase oil in back rubbers used to control cattle parasites. Basis for this recommendation was the resultant hyperkeratosis stemming from the organochlorines in the spent oil.

In situations where misuse of pesticides resulted in residues (use of heptachlor on turkey ranges), Extension provided information to all appropriate State Extension specialists apprising them of the problem and encouraged the dissemination of this information to producers.

In the area of drugs, Extension has cooperated with FDA and FSQS to keep State Extension personnel informed about those drugs used as feed additives or for therapeutic purposes that are capable of producing violative residues. Some examples are:

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Sulfonamides in Swine -- State Extension personnel conducted epidemiologic investigations on request to assist swine producers to evaluate their management practices and feed purchase or mixing procedures and advised them of procedural changes to avoid violative residues in swine offered for slaughter. Information was also provided to practicing veterinarians to keep them aware of these problems.

Antibiotic Residues in Cull Dairy Cows -- Extension provided leadership in bringing together representatives of the dairy industry, Animal Health Institute, FDA, and FSQS to address this problem. A handbook on the FSQS screening test program was prepared and distributed to State Extension Services. This information was to be used in conjunction with Extension education programs for the dairy industry. In addition, State Extension personnel were provided with educational materials prepared by the Animal Health Institute as well as timely releases prepared by FDA and FSQS. Also, slide sets prepared by FSQS were distributed to State Extension personnel. Information was also provided to meat packers to keep them informed. Extension veterinarians were encouraged to provide similar information to veterinary practitioners.

Organophosphate Toxicities in Cattle -- Following reports of alleged toxicities in cattle treated with organophosphates for grub (Hypoderma) control, Extension funded a special project to investigate the problem. On-farm studies, including autopsies, serology, and toxicology disclosed that the reported symptoms did not result from the organophosphates but did result from the death and digestion of the hypoderma larvae within the tissues. This information resulted in helping farmers to better understand and be more selective when using grubicides to avoid this problem.

Distribution of Relevant Information: Extension has developed a working arrangement with FDA and FSQS whereby copies of relevant information are provided to the National Extension office and are then distributed to the appropriate Extension specialists in all of the States.

Adverse Drug Reactions: The National Extension office has for many years encouraged State Extension veterinarians to keep practicing veterinarians apprised of the FDA Adverse Drug Reaction Reporting

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Program. It is believed that this effort has contributed materially in improving practitioner response to this effort.

There is enclosed copies of relevant information distributed by Extension.



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Enclosures

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