

Topic of the Month

Rabies

Recently, Somerset county has been the location of several cases of rabies. While rabies in livestock is not common, it generally manifests itself in one of two ways.

The furious form causes animals to act irritable and aggressive. They may attack and bite. They are sensitive to noise and may chew or swallow unusual objects. They sometimes run their penmates around and may mount and ride them. It quickly progresses to incoordination, seizures, and paralysis, followed by death.

The dumb or paralytic form causes ataxia, or incoordinated gait. It causes paralysis of the musculature around the throat, preventing swallowing. This results in the classic presentation of a slack-jawed animal that is staggering and drooling. These animals are usually not aggressive and don't try to bite. Because of their inability to swallow, they give the impression that they are choking and many owners and veterinarians expose themselves to rabies by looking in their mouths or passing a stomach tube to check for a foreign body in the esophagus. The progression to paralysis is rapid and may result in a neurologic down cow.

Of course, the signs can be vague. In cattle, two of the most commonly observed clinical signs are persistent bellowing and straining to pass manure.

There is no pre-mortem test for rabies. The state performs free testing on submitted brain specimens by looking for characteristic microscopic lesions.

The most important thing to do in cases of suspected rabies is to take appropriate precautions to prevent human exposure.

Commodity Futures

Prices

As of October 31, 2018

Corn	\$3.63/bu
Soybean Meal	\$306.40/ton
Milk (Class III)	\$15.53/cwt
Beef (Live cattle)	\$115.85/cwt

Practice News

- In case you missed it...Dr. Croushore has published his first book. It is a 250 page compilation of articles he authored in the *Daily American* and is titled, "Oops,...and other Words You Don't Like to Hear Your Surgeon Say". It will be available for purchase for \$16.95 (plus tax) at the office, the *Daily American*, other retailers and at www.madeinsomersetcounty.com. At the risk of sounding presumptuous, signed copies are available upon request.
- USDA will be discontinuing the free official metal ear tag program. This includes the orange metal ear tags for brucellosis vaccination. There are a few exceptions. Small ruminant producers will be able to order 100 free scrapie tags (which will be orange) every two years direct from USDA. Free official orange RFID tags will be available for brucellosis vaccinated cattle. There is also a supply of free RFID tags for beef producers which can be ordered in strings of 25 through the PA Department of Agriculture regional office. Producers and livestock markets will be expected to buy metal or RFID tags when the current supply runs out. This is a very recent announcement, so there may be changes or updates in the future.

Upcoming Events

- PennState Extension will hold a free session about Troubleshooting Reproduction in Dairy Farms on November 9 in Greensburg. Registration is required. A complete listing of upcoming workshops is available on the PennState Extension website at <https://extension.psu.edu/animals-and-livestock/dairy/see-all-dairy/shopby/workshops>