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VETERINARY SPECIMENS

Submitting for Bacteriological Examination.

How to Prepare for Testing When Animals Die Suspected of Such Dangerous Disease as Rabies, Anthrax, Blackleg, Contagious Abortion, Etc.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

The amount of care and judgment necessary in selecting and forwarding specimens for bacteriological examination is not generally realized, and as a result a good deal of material received is either in a state of putrefaction, or taken from an unsuitable part of the animal and is consequently useless. Take, for example, blackleg. In this disease the bacteria producing the condition are localized in the black, gassy swellings, and are not found generally throughout the body. If a blood sample, or portion of muscle other than the blackened part, is sent to the laboratory the bacilli are not found in the specimen, whereas if a small piece of the black muscle had been sent they would have been present.

It is necessary to collect the specimens in a careful manner, using instruments that have been sterilized by boiling; and placing the material in a container that has been similarly sterilized. If this is not done, the harmless bacteria which are present everywhere, will gain entrance to the tissue, and will multiply very rapidly and completely overgrow the disease producing ones, which do not as a rule multiply as readily under the same conditions, and on examination at the laboratory nothing may be found but these harmless organisms.

A complete report should always accompany any material to be examined. The absence of definite information about the case causes delay, and makes it difficult to give reliable information, because there are a great many different kinds of disease producing bacteria, the isolation of which requires different technique, whereas specific information may assist the search for the probable causative agents.

Material intended for examination must not be placed in preservative fluids, which would destroy the bacteria. Large specimens, such as an entire organ, should be removed with sterile instruments, at once wrapped in several layers of cheesecloth moistened with a 10 per cent. formalde-

hyde solution, then in oiled or wax paper and packed in ice and sawdust. It is often inconvenient to use ice, in which case the organ may be liberally sprinkled with borax or boric acid, wrapped in several folds of dry cheesecloth and packed in shavings in a wooden box. If borax is not available wrap in the formaldehyde moistened cheesecloth and pack in shavings. Material should never be placed in unsterilized packing material unless protected from contamination by one of these methods. Small specimens should be placed in wide-mouthed bottles or fruit jars that have been boiled and cooled before using and no preservative of any kind should be used as it would penetrate small specimens and kill the bacteria.

Pus.—Pus for examination may be forwarded in a small bottle, previously sterilized by boiling. Care should be taken to avoid getting it on the outside of the bottle or stopper, as this is at least unpleasant, and may be dangerous, to handle.

Rabies.—The head of a dog suspected of rabies should be wrapped in a protective covering of cheesecloth or oiled paper, (packed in crushed ice and sawdust during hot weather), and sent as quickly as possible to the nearest laboratory doing this work—in Ontario the Provincial Board of Health Laboratories, at 5 Queen's Park, Toronto, or its branches at Fort William, Sault Ste. Marie, North Bay, Kingston and London. Never kill a dog suspected of rabies, as in the early stages it may not be possible to find the Negri bodies in the brain cells; but restrain the animal and properly look after it for ten days, before which time if rabid it will have died.

Hemorrhagic Septicemia.—The pneumonic lung, or liver or other organs showing lesions, should be forwarded, packed in one of the ways already described. It is well to include the heart, the vessels having been tied before removal with string soaked in a disinfecting solution. Wrap each organ separately before placing in the box.

Anthrax.—If Anthrax is suspected never open the carcass, as this permits the anthrax bacilli to form spores in the presence of the air, in which condition they will live for years, and form a centre of infection. Remove an ear and send to the laboratory in a sterile container, or wrapped in disinfectant moistened cheesecloth, and packed as already described.

Blackleg.—In a case of suspected blackleg send a small bit of the blackened and gas-filled muscle in a sterile wide-mouthed bottle.

Contagious Abortion.—The most convenient method is to send a blood sample from the cow for the agglutination and complement fixation tests. The blood is collected from the jugular vein by means of a sterile hypodermic needle, and a small sterile bottle is filled up to the cork. As soon as the blood clots it should be mailed to the laboratory, where the serum is separated and the tests carried out.

Where the owner of animals wishes to send specimens for examination he will find it to his advantage to consult his veterinarian, as he is in a position to advise as to what material should be submitted and how best to send it.—Dr. Ronald Gwatkin, Ontario Veterinary College, Toronto.

Pastures Pay in Pork Production.

"One of the best means of cutting the cost of producing pork," says E. F. Ferrin, who is in charge of the hog section at Minnesota University Farm, "is to use good pasture and forage crops. This practice is advisable whether grain be high in price or cheap; there is a decided saving in either case. Pigs getting green feed are more thrifty than those raised in dry lots, consequently gain faster and make pork at a lower cost.

Results obtained at the farm prove beyond question that it is a shortsighted policy to neglect to grow good forage crops when pigs are being raised. Blue grass and similar pastures furnish good feed in the spring, but during summer are little better than an exercising ground. Some one crop, or more than one, should be grown to give fresh succulent green feed in summer and early fall. Dwarf Essex rape, alfalfa and red clover are the outstanding top notch forage crops in the corn belt. Of these rape is by far the most suitable for Minnesota conditions. The cost of seeding is low—about five pounds of seed per acre is an average quantity—and in favorable season the crop is ready to be pastured six weeks from sowing. If grain is fed in reasonable amounts an acre of rape will carry from twenty to thirty growing pigs through the season.

"White hogs, and sometimes black and red ones, blister when running in rape. There is nothing peculiar about this crop which causes blistering; the trouble results simply from the combination of moisture, transferred from the rape to the hog, and a hot sun. By keeping pigs out of the rape patch until the dew or rain has evaporated from the leaves of the plants, blistering can be prevented.

"Rape can be sown as early in the spring as the ground can be worked. Even a small patch in a feed lot will save grain in raising pigs."

Tomatoes are ripening, and it is necessary to apply small quantities of nitrate of soda around each plant to hasten them.

Spanish Women Organize.

The Spanish Women's Crusade is the name of an organization formed to conduct an active campaign in Alfonso's kingdom to obtain legal equality for women.

Motor for Snowplough.

A gasoline motor of the lawn-mower type has been employed by the inventor of a snowplough for cleaning sidewalks.

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