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Agriculture Animal and **Plant Health**

Inspection Service

Veterinary Services

APHIS 91-39 July 1981

National Tick Surveillance Program Calendar Year 1979

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National Tick Surveillance Program Calendar Year 1979

During calendar year 1979, the collection and submission of ticks from native and imported animals and plant and animal material was 5.6 percent less than in 1978. There were 11,553 collections in 1979, compared with 12,242 collections in 1978 and 4,142 collections in 1977.

The Harry S Truman Animal Import Center Begins Operation

Almost 10 years after Federal legislation was signed authorizing the establishing of an isolated animal import station to allow the entry of breeding animals into the United States from countries where foot-and-mouth disease and rinderpest exist, the first shipment of 60 Zebu cattle was received on February 8, 1980. The shipment arrived by air from Brazil at the Boca Chica Naval Air Station.

The Harry S. Truman Animal Import Center is located on Fleming Key, an island connected to Key West, Florida, by a short bridge. This location was selected as the site of the quarantine facility because it fulfilled the exacting requirements necessary for such a facility. High security, isolation from other animals, and logistical considerations were of prime importance in the selection of this site.

High security is required in order to limit access of unauthorized personnel onto the facility. This is readily accomplished by the fact that the import center is located within a e' U.S. Department of Defense facility which is a restricted area surrounded by a chain-link fence as well as other security features. Isolation from other animals is assured since there are no domestic or wild swine or ruminants on Fleming Key. The island is 60 air miles from the mainland and serviced by a single road which can be readily monitored.

Air transportation is provided by the commercial airlines which service the Key West Area. Ocean-going vessels carrying livestock, with special permission, are allowed to use the U.S. Navy's piers in Key West. Livestock arriving by air may use the nearby Boca Chica Naval Air Station.

The import center, which at present is only accepting cattle, has the capacity for 400 imported cattle as well as 100 test cattle and 100 test swine. All import animals are kept in isolation for 5 months during which time they are thoroughly tested and observed to assure they are free of disease. Two groups of 400 cattle can be handled each year. If any animal in the import center is affected with foot-and-mouth disease or rinderpest, then the entire group of import animals is refused entry into the United States.

Pre-entry procedures require that all animals are carefully screened and tested in the country of origin to assure that they meet the USDA standards of health before they are allowed in the animal import center. In addition to conducting a battery of sophisticated tests for viral, bacterial, and protozoal agents, all the animals are carefully inspected and treated to insure they are free of ticks, mites, and other external parasites. This thorough health study of the import animals as individuals and as a group is necessary to protect the U.S. livestock industry against the introduction of exotic diseases such as foot-and-mouth, rinderpest, and trypanosomiasis.

The Boophilus Microplus Eradication Program in Puerto Rico

Tick eradication efforts are currently in progress against Boophilus microplus in Puerto Rico. Surveillance activities and treatment operations are being conducted to detect and rid the island of this serious threat to the local beef and dairy industries. During calendar year 1979, there were 1,979 collections made from domesticated animals on the island. These included 1,947 collections identified from cattle, 22 from horses, 2 from dogs, 5 from goats, 2 from swine, and 1 from sheep.

The Status of Amblyomma Variegatum in Puerto Rico

The National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) identified only 4 collections of the tropical bont tick in 1979 as compared to 47 collections in 1978, 54 in 1977, and 26 in 1976. In the past, the collections have been principally from the municipalities of Cayey, Cidra, and Caguas. The collections identified in 1979 were from the municipalities of Cidra, Comerio, San German, and Rio Piedras.

The Boophilus Program in Texas

The overall Texas <u>Boophilus</u> situation continued to look good during calendar year 1979. As expected, there were the usual apprehensions of livestock which had strayed from Mexico into the buffer zone on the Texas side of the Rio Grande. A small problem area still exists in northern Webb County where there has been a spillover of <u>B</u>. <u>annulatus</u> from the normal cattle host onto white-tail deer.

The Boophilus tick identification from Texas made at the NVSL totaled 135 collections for calendar year 1979. This is appreciably higher than the 69 <u>Boophilus</u> collections made in 1978, and 66 <u>Boophilus</u> collections made in 1977. However, it should be pointed out that 72 of the 1979 calendar year collections were from deer and 1 from a covote as the result of an intensive wildlife/tick survey conducted in the problem area of northern Webb County. During calendar year 1979. there were 62 Boophilus collections submitted from cattle in Texas, and the majority of the submissions involved cattle on a single premise in the problem area of nothern Webb County and do not represent new premise infestations.

Factors Affecting the Boophilus Tick Eradication Program

The Boophilus tick eradication program has as its goal the elimination of all Boophilus ticks in the United States and preventing their reintroduction. The two species of ticks of the genus Boophilus that are occasionally introduced into the United States are Boophilus annulatus, the cattle fever tick, and Boophilus microplus, the tropical cattle tick. Although closely related, sufficient biological and genetic differences exist between the two tick species so that they are not normally found in the same area.

The primary purpose of the <u>Boophilus</u> tick eradication program is to avert the economic disaster these two ticks are capable of causing. Both <u>B</u>. <u>annulatus</u> and <u>B</u>. <u>microplus</u> transmit Babesia bigemina and <u>B</u>. bovis, the causative agents of bovine babesiosis (cattle tick fever, Texas fever). Of no less importance is bovine anaplasmosis, a disease produced by <u>Anaplasma marginale</u> also transmitted by Boophilus ticks.

In order to free southern United States cattle of bovine babesiosis, the <u>Roophilus</u> tick eradication program was started in 1906. The tick vector was the most logical link to attack in the disease chain. Following the elimination of the <u>Boophilus</u> ticks, the <u>Babesia</u> soon died out because the other species of ticks were incapable of transmitting the disease agents. The livestock industry benefited by being free of both <u>Boophilus</u> ticks and babesiosis.

Even when not transmitting disease agents, <u>Boophilus</u> ticks are of economic importance for the following reasons:

- They produce damage to the hide which reduces its commercial value.
- They cause "tick worry", which reduces the efficiency of the living animal, resulting in lowered milk production and reduced weight gains.
- They suck blood which results in anemia and occasionally death.
- Tick bites serve as portals of entry for secondary disease agents, and/or as sites for screwworm infestations.

Tick epidemiology, the study of the various relationships between ticks, their hosts, and the environment is of tremendous importance to the eradication program. Environmental factors such as variations in seasonal weather may play a very important role in the yearly cycles of ticks. Temperature and humidity affect the incubation period of

eggs and survival of larvae. People working in the Boophilus eradication program must be constantly aware of the changing ecological conditions in the environment. Ideal weather conditions may decrease natural mortality and allow the ticks to "overproduce". This increased tick population can result in the infestation of new hosts such as deer. which are not normally parasitized by <u>Boophilus</u> ticks. The "spillover" to a new host is rare in occurence. Such a "spillover" has taken place with Boophilus annulatus and white-tailed deer in northern Webb County. Texas.

Adverse weather conditions that cause a reduction in the survival of the tick larvae will help the eradication program only if we are aware that the ticks are present in an area and take appropriate action. Low populations of <u>Boophilus</u> ticks may not be detected for long periods of time. Failure to detect ticks can result in their spread to new land areas and new infestations not included within the active surveillance program.

Ecological disturbances by humans can also affect the distribution of Boophilus ticks. Land areas previously poorly suited for ticks often become a more suitable habitat for ticks if scrub and brush are replaced by grassland pasture. The introduction of predators, such as the fire ant, often influence the incidence and distribution of tick populations. Ecological changes may increase or decrease the host population, which in turn will affect the survival of the tick. Such ecological changes occured in southern Texas with the introduction of buffel grass and the implementation of the screwworm eradication program. These two

changes resulted in greater populations of cattle and deer, as well improved tick habitat. Because of these changes, tick survival was enhanced.

The normal hosts for <u>B. annulatus</u> in the United States are cattle, horses, and occasionally sheep and goats. <u>Boophilus microplus</u> infests cattle, horses, goats, sheep and occasionally deer. Humans can influence the choice of hosts. Exotic animals which may be normal hosts for <u>Boophilus</u> ticks in their native country are sometimes introduced into the United States. This occurred with the introduction of nilgai, an antelope-like game animal, into the endemic tick area of south Texas.

Animals that do not normally associate, or do so only under special conditions, may be forced into sharing land area so that they become a common group composed of several species of animals. In such situations, surveillance programs must be developed to include all species which may be a threat to the tick eradication program. Recognition of changing epidemiologic factors must lead to the development of new surveillance methods and policies. The program must remain flexible and receptive to new concepts if total eradication is to be acheived and maintained.

Dipping Vat Management, Resistance, and Tick Eradication

The objective of dipping livestock is to kill parasites, normally external parasites, without causing harm or death to the animal being

¹Nolan, James and Roulston, W. J., Acaricide Resistance as a Factor in the Management of Acari of Medical and Veterinary dipped. Dipping is generally considered the most convenient, efficient, and economical method of killing ticks on large numbers of cattle.

Dipping vats provide an efficient method of pesticide application in that the pesticide is confined which eliminates the problem of drifting sprays and exposes only the target animal to the pesticide. A drain pen functions as a recovery unit which returns excess dip carried out by the animal to the vat, thus protecting the environment and reducing the cost through better chemical utilization.

It is very important to use approved pesticides at the recommended concentration. Lethal concentration percentage (LC percent) have been established for each pesticide used in the official USDA tick eradication program. The minimum acceptable concentration of pesticide should be at least the LC_{99} . The LC_{99} is a mathematical estimate based on trials performed under controlled laboratory conditions in which 99 percent of the target species is killed. Years of field experience have documented the need to establish program pesticides that are above the LC_{qq} . This extra pesticide concentration may be termed the "eradication factor". It is important to use pesticides at greater than the LC₉₉ in order to avoid the development of resistance. "Chemicals have been valueless following the development of resistance." There appears to be

Importance, IN: Recent Advances in Acarology, Volume II, Edited by J. G. Rodriguez, Academic Press, New York, San Francisco, London, 1979, p. 12. two classical approaches to the use of pesticides.

- ¹ 1. Attempting to overcome the development of tick pesticide resistance, as many countries of the world are doing.
 - 2. Preventing the development of tick pesticide resistance as the United States <u>Boophilus</u> eradication program has done. Relative to resistance, pesticides used to treat livestock parasites must be considered as "a non-renewable resource".

Good dipping vat management is based on sound, technical knowledge of the pesticide being used, along with understanding the biology of the tick. Guidelines for dipping vat management should be established on the basis of well-designed field and laboratory studies.

Vat management must be concerned with the safe, efficient, economic use, and handling of pesticides from the time the program receives the pesticide until its final utilization and disposal. Disposal must include proper disposition of the pesticide, original pesticide containers, as well as other contaminated equipment or materials.

The dipping vat manager must follow specific directions. There is no excuse for failure in tick control or eradication because of pesticide mismanagement. Pesticide use is controlled by State and Federal regulations and laws. Environmental Protection Agency requirements must be considered since non-compliance may result in the banning of certain pesticides which might have critical consequences for the future of the tick eradication program. Accuracy is a most important part of good vat management and encompasses all activities relating to the vat including:

- 1. Determining the vat capacity.
- 2. Charging the vat, which includes filling with water, premixing of the pesticide, and agitation of the charged vat.
- Sampling of the dip for quantitative analysis and sedimentation.
- Replenishing with water and/or pesticides.
- 5. Maintaining accurate dipping vat records.

When dipping vat activities are performed according to available directions, many dipping vat problems are eliminated. There would be no livestock deaths due to "over-charged" vats, nor would cattle be dipped in pesticides below the prescribed concentrations for killing ticks if official guidelines were followed.

Vat agitation is the most misunderstood and improperly utilized activity in vat management. Field experience indicates that vats are generally charged correctly; however, absence of a vat-side test for the organophosphorus and organochlorine pesticides has placed added responsibility on the people dipping livestock. Today, the laboratory conducted quantatitive analysis provides after-the-fact information; whereas the vat-side test used in the past with the arsenic dip, provided immediate concentration information before the animals were dipped.

Manual dipping vat agitation is strenous work. Air agitation assists in mixing the dip, but no device replaces the bottom scraping of the vat to resuspend the sediment. Sufficient time must be spent agitating the vat; a minimum of 30 to 45 minutes of hard work is necessary to agitate a large dipping vat. Once agitation is completed, dipping the livestock must proceed rapidly or the vat contents will begin to settle.

The pesticide's effectiveness is impaired by pollution of the dip by clay, dirt, manure, urine, hair, etc., carried in by the animals being dipped. The relationship between pollutants and the pesticide will vary with the chemical and the type of formulation. "The settling rate for a suspension is directly related to the type of formulation, age of the dip, and degree of pollution."² "Wettable powder formulations, like all dips are eventually reduced in efficiency by pollutants which, as they increase in quantity, virtually smother the insecticide's effectiveness".

Density, temperature and chemical reaction between pollutants and the pesticide are factors causing layering to take place in the dipping vat. Agitation is more difficult if layering has occured.

The dipping vat design may be such that agitation is necessary while the cattle are being dipped. "In the use

, The Asuntol Story, Bayer, Leverkusen, Germany, Veterinary Department, p. 15.

³Ibid, p. 14.

of wettable powder with poor suspendability, often 10 to 15 percent of the active ingredient is lost at the very beginning of a dipping operation. The pesticide is deposited at the "jump-off" end of the dipping vat where the dipping vat is deepest and where an eddy is 4 created in the dipping process." Adequate agitation in the area of the eddy will alter the eddy currents and reduce or prevent pesticide deposits. The eddy phenomenon is one reason vat samples are reported from the laboratory with low concentrations even after large numbers of cattle have been dipped. It is not possible to satisfactorily agitate a dipping vat by swimming cattle through it, nor is adequate agitation always maintained during the dipping process.

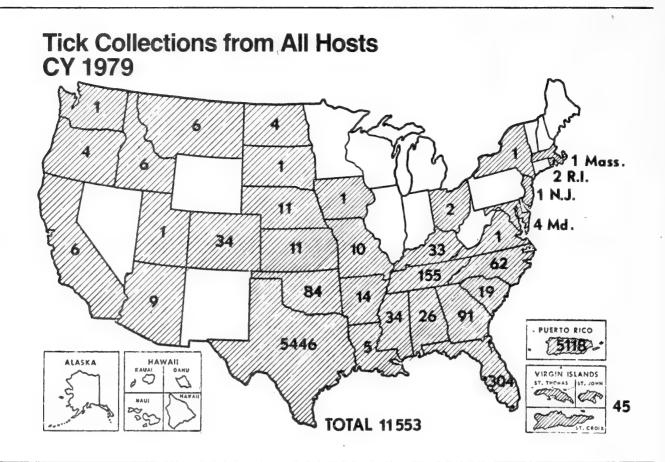
Federal standards have been established for pesticide dipping concentrations, dip sedimentation rates, the number of cattle that can be dipped per gallon of vat content, and the length of time the vat contents may be used. These standards, formulated to function on a program basis, are practical, since they are based on field program studies and controlled laboratory research. It is generally accepted that in the United States, the high standards established have prevented the development of tick resistance to pesticides.

⁴Carson, Nathan, B., unpublished presentation given to Tick Technical Meeting, Kerrville, Texas, March 6, 1980, "Phenomena Which Adversely Impact the Objective of Optimum Pesticidal Activity in Dipping Vats."

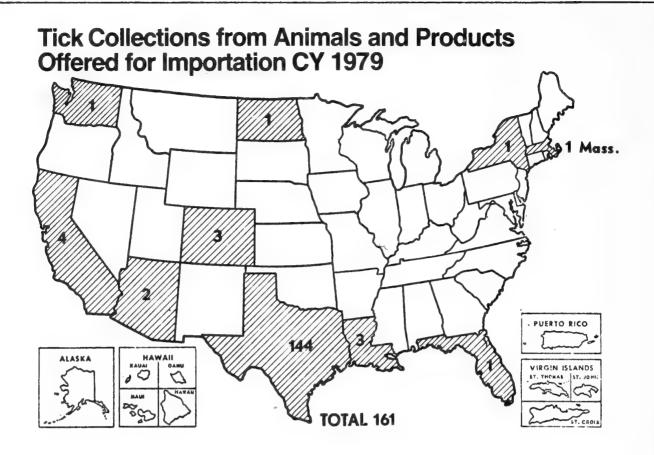
Statistical Tables and Maps

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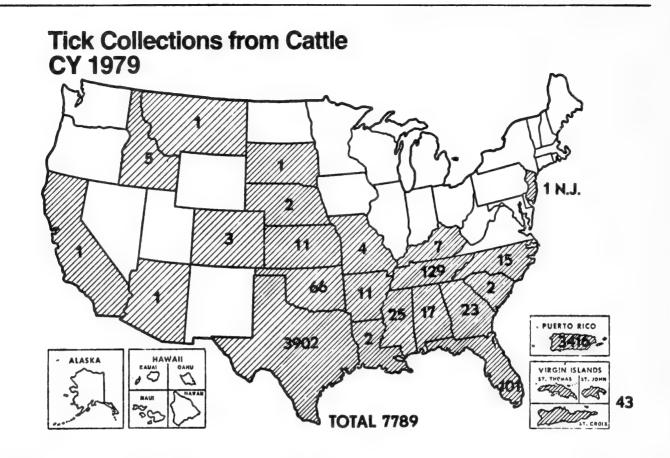


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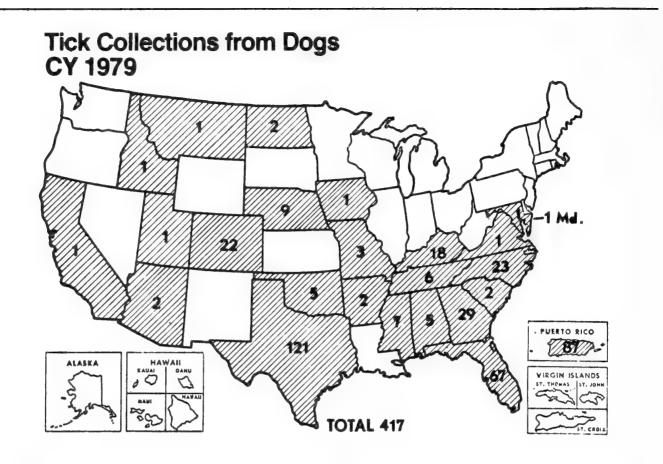
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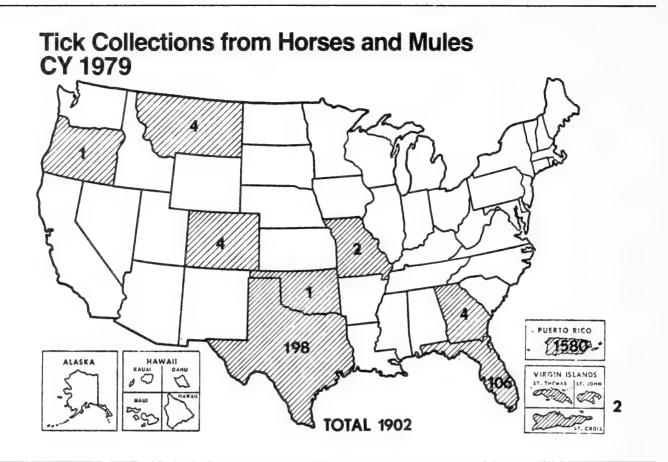
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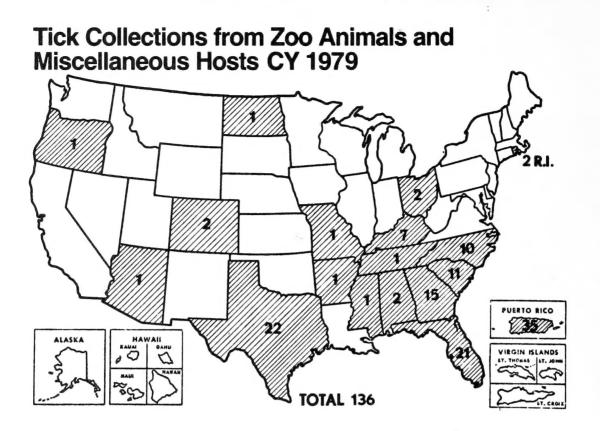
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*U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1981-0-740-932/APHIS-154

