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Connecticut State Board of Agriculture.

SPECIAL REPORT

OF

Commissioners
COMMISSIONERS

ON

DISEASES OF DOMESTICATED ANIMALS.

TUBERCULOSIS.

The discoveries of modern science, both in medical and veterinary studies, have such an important bearing upon public health, that the well-established facts in regard to this disease, commonly called consumption, should be as widely disseminated as possible.

The facts are well settled that tuberculosis is not only a communicable disease, that it occurs in many animals, especially the human and bovine races, and is intercommunicable between them. While this last point hardly admits of positive proof, it is generally accepted by pathologists.

In its common and acknowledged form as affecting the lungs (pulmonary consumption), it is a leading cause of death in the human family; add to this its more secret and abstruse forms as affecting other organs, it is one of the worst scourges affecting humanity.

As a communicable disease it must also be viewed largely as a preventable disease. Aside from our common interest in the subject in behalf of humanity, the existence of this

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disease among our domestic animals, especially neat stock, where it may have been derived from man, propagated in the herds, and again in a mysterious manner spreading the seeds of disease and death in the human family, — appeals directly to farmers as a class.

It has long been admitted to be hereditary, but now it appears more often to arise from cohabitation (dwelling together) than from heredity; while it is supposed to affect all classes of animals, yet its manifestations are so different in some species that its general prevalence in different species has not been admitted by pathologists till recently, and some still hold the question in doubt. But we know enough as to the nature of this disease that cannot be controverted, to enable us to alleviate much suffering, and save many lives, even with our imperfect knowledge.

This paper will treat only of its existence among neat stock and the consequent relations to human health. It will be brief, not because the subject is trivial, but as not designed for a comprehensive treatise, but to give only leading facts, sufficient to show clearly the nature of the disease and the obvious means of averting its serious consequences.

Tuberculosis, affecting the lungs, the most common and communicable form, is indicated by a cough, difficult respiration, and general weakness and wasting away or emaciation. The persistence of these symptoms proves that it is not a common cold. The animal should be quarantined; if a milch cow, the milk rejected; and if there is no speedy recovery, a veterinarian should be consulted or the beast slaughtered as valueless and dangerous.

The time is coming when some strict sanitary rules will be adopted in all cases of human tuberculosis. The necessity for this is generally admitted, but rarely enforced. Traveling in public conveyances thus has its dangers, especially so-called health resorts, which are liable to become rather hotbeds of disease.

The time has already come for the stock owner to exercise watchful care over the health of his herds. The



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soundness of all purchased animals should be carefully investigated, as well as their antecedents. A consumptive patient should never have charge of cattle. The dried sputa, floating in the air as dust or falling upon the fodder proves a fertile source of spreading the disease. The attendant may contract the disease from cattle or give it to them.

Crowded, overheated stables, with imperfect ventilation, or any causes by which the tone of the system is reduced, destroy the power to resist the disease and favor its development.

It is not proved that animals contract the disease from the breath of the sick, but rather by eating the rejected food upon which the saliva or sputa may have fallen, or by inhaling the dried sputa floating in the air.

A healthy animal should never be allowed to eat the rejected food from animals suspected of tuberculosis, or be kept in the same barn or field. Too many well-attested cases of fatal tuberculosis sustain this proposition.

There is a great difference in susceptibility to this disease in animals as in the human subject. Evidence is rare, showing that an entire herd, even in the worst sanitary conditions, have contracted the disease, yet from ten to fifty per cent. has been reported in some cases.

The flesh of tuberculous animals is dangerous as food; hence, no use in trying to fatten them for beef.

As the disease is hereditary, a suspected animal should never be used as a breeder. A tuberculous animal has little strength for work, and will not pay for the keeping.

In milch cows, in addition to the common danger of contagion, the milk is unsafe for food even for swine or poultry, and it only remains for the owner of a tuberculous subject to meet the loss promptly and slaughter the animal before others contract the disease.

In one notable case under our own observation, before the characteristics of the disease were as well known as at present, in a herd of ten animals, for a period of half a dozen years, one died or was killed as valueless each year; before that, by a system of quarantine and slaughter, the plague was

a. d. s. April 27/77



stayed. The owner afterwards said: "The slaughter of the whole herd at first attack would have been a pecuniary gain."

While all would avoid tuberculous beef as food, yet we may recollect that thorough cooking destroys its dangerous properties, and boiling has the same effect on milk, destroys the germs of disease.

We do not wish to appear as alarmists, and create any unnecessary excitement among farmers or consumers of any products, yet we deem it prudent to exercise caution and be on the safe side, where also lies true economy, and would advise that all animals that are thriftless and show the symptoms of tuberculosis be destroyed, though the disease may not have progressed to the degree of rendering the animal apparently worthless.

From its very nature, the prevention of the spread of tuberculosis, and the eradication of the existing cases, depend upon the cattle owners themselves, and on them rests the responsibility, which is grave indeed, as so vitally affecting the welfare of both man and beast. Therefore, this commission do not consider that the State should exercise the same authority over tuberculosis as in case of contagious pleuro-pneumonia, and slaughter infected or suspected animals at public expense. Yet the commissioners consider it their duty to investigate all cases of suspected contagious disease, to control the same, as far as possible, by advice and authority, for the preservation of the public health, as well as the material interests of agriculture, and in accordance with these views issue this notice of warning and advice.

E. H. HYDE, } *Commissioners on*
T. S. GOLD, } *Diseases of Domes-*
J. W. ALSOP, } *ticated Animals.*

HARTFORD, June 10, 1890.



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