

Smörgåsbord



Harold Johnson
Publisher and
Editorial
Director

**Mark Newhall Named
Editor Of FARM SHOW**



Mark Newhall

We're pleased to announce that Mark Newhall has been named editor of FARM SHOW. When Mark joined our editorial staff six years ago, the magazine was only 1½ years old and had about 40,000 subscribers. Today, we have more than 130,000 and the list is still growing.

Mark has contributed greatly to this growth, first as an Associate Editor and, for the past three years, as Managing Editor. We believe his promotion to editor, at only 29 years of age, makes him the youngest editor of a major farm magazine in the entire United States and Canada.

Mark has just returned from a three week trip to England and Scotland where he covered two major farm shows, and combed the countryside in search of latest new products, ideas and farm inventions you'll be reading about in this and upcoming issues.

A farm-reared native of Perham, Minn., Mark joined FARM SHOW in 1978 following graduation from the University of Minnesota in Agricultural Journalism. Each year, he covers virtually all the major farm shows in the U.S., Canada and several foreign countries. Through his extensive coverage of fairs and shows in all corners of the world, Mark has become an expert on new products. In fact, we don't think there's a farm editor who's as well posted and up-to-date on latest new products, or who has a sharper eye for spotting new products.

If you have an invention, or a favorite gadget, you're proud of, Mark would like to hear about it. Send along a photo or two, if possible, and a brief description of what the invention is and how it works. Call or write Mark at: Mark Newhall, Editor, FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 704, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 (ph 612 469-5572).

**Don't Make These
Same Mistakes!**

If you raise livestock, you can learn some valuable lessons from the following "mystery deaths" which these unsuspecting farmers encountered.

A Wisconsin dairyman came out one morning and discovered his cows literally dying like flies. By 11:00 a.m., Bill had 11 dead cows. At 5:30 that afternoon, no others appeared to be sick. But, by 9:30, four more were dead," recalls Dr. L. C. Allenstein, a large animal practitioner at Whitewater,

Wis., who recently reported on the case in his "Cowside Practice" column in Hoard's Dairyman.

The night before, a gate to the dry cow lot had been left open and the animals got out. They wandered up around the house and back porch where they found some inviting evergreen shrubs to chew on.

"There was the answer to the mystery deaths. The evergreen shrubs were the commonly grown Japanese yew variety. All parts of this shrub — foliage, bark and seeds, whether dry or green — are toxic to people and to all livestock", Dr. Allenstein pointed out. "In another instance, a dairyman trimmed his Japanese yew shrubs and, unaware



that they were poisonous, threw the trimmings into a cow pasture. He lost six heifers," notes Dr. Allenstein, who warns that "the yew shrub should never be planted around a farm where livestock are housed. There is no known antidote or treatment other than to open the stomachs surgically and empty the contents."

Ammoniated feed has been blamed for cattle deaths in several dozen reported cases throughout the U.S. where anhydrous was piped into piles of medium to good quality forage. The animal deaths have prompted extension livestock specialists in Kansas, Indiana, Illinois and other states to re-evaluate their "how to" recommendations for ammoniating various grades of roughages.

Old transmission oil painted onto the wooden beds of haywagons as a preservative was pegged as the most probable cause of sheep poisoning on an Ohio farm. Apparently the sheep licked the oil off the wagons while using them for shade, according to a report on the mysterious poisoning in The Ohio Farmer. Specialists note that old transmission oil contains triaryl phosphates which, even in very minute amounts (as little as 13 parts per million, which is equivalent to 40 single soybean seeds in 38 bu.) can be deadly to livestock or humans. "Cattlemen have used old transmission oil in back rubbers. Mechanics work in it every day and don't always wash their hands before they grab some food," says the frugal sheep farmer who wasn't aware of the deadly danger associated with used transmission oil. "We're still not 100% sure this is the cause. But this is something we could get our hands on, and I want to prevent others from making the same mistake," he noted in the Ohio Farmer report of his costly experience which cost him a ram and several ewes.

**Dairymen Win Settlement
In Stray Voltage Case**

"We think it's a landmark case for all dairymen who have been hurt financially by stray voltage problems caused by faulty equipment," says Joe McCormick, attorney for Wisconsin dairy farmers Marvin Zorn, and his son Ronald, both of Lena, who have been awarded a \$79,786 settlement for lost milk production, vet bills and other "stray voltage" problems caused by a faulty power transformer.

Last October, a 12 member circuit court jury in Oconto County found the defendants — Electric Research and Mfg., the Kentucky manufacturer of the transformer; Oconto Electric Cooperative which installed it; and Federated Rural Electric Insurance Corp., the electric company's insurer — negligent and awarded the Zorns \$79,786. The case was appealed to the Third District Appellate Court in Wausau where a panel of three judges upheld the lower court's finding of negligence. The defendants have now appealed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, asking that body to hear the case.

"We're hoping that the state Supreme Court decides not to hear the case. But, even if it is heard, we're confident that the settlement awarded the Zorns will be upheld," McCormick told FARM SHOW.

He is a member of the firm of Plier-Judge-McCormick, of Oconto, Wis. Also representing the Zorns in the case is Adrian Schoone, of Racine, president of the Wisconsin Bar Association.

"Because this is one of the nation's first stray voltage cases implicating a utility company, it has widespread ramifications. We're getting calls from attorneys throughout the U.S. who are representing dairymen in similar stray voltage cases still in litigation," says McCormick.

He notes that the Zorns started noticing decreased production, increased mastitis and other problems in their 60-cow herd soon after the transformer in question was installed in 1979. "It was replaced after several months but," says McCormick, "The stray voltage problem it caused continued to take its costly toll on the herd's health long after. Production fell about 30% over the next couple years.

"The electric company argued that lightning had triggered the stray-voltage problem, that the Zorns were at fault because of poor management, and that electrical wiring in their barn violated the state's electrical code. But the jury bought none of these arguments, holding the electric company and the other defendants totally responsible," says McCormick.

In Minnesota, shortly before this issue went to press, Richard and Denise Klein, of Miltona, were awarded \$45,500 by a Douglas County jury in that state's first stray voltage case in which a utility company has been ordered to pay damages.

The jury found the Klein's electric supplier — Runestone Electric Association, headquartered in Alexandria, 100% negligent for knowing about a possible stray voltage problem but failing to immediately warn the Kleins. According to attorney Robert Havorson, of New Ulm, who represented the Kleins, the national Rural Electrification Administration (REA) office in Washington, D.C. sent out a letter in Sept., 1981, recommending that its member cooperatives warn their customers about potential stray voltage problems. "But Runestone didn't publish the warning until Dec., 1982," Havorson told FARM SHOW. "Their failure to immediately warn the Kleins of the stray voltage problem was a key factor in the utility company losing the case," Havorson feels. "The Klein case is an important first step in holding utilities to the same standards as any other company. If you have a problem with your product and know it, you have a duty to immediately let your customers know about it. Runestone didn't and a jury has now ordered the utility to pay the Kleins \$45,500 in damages."

Havorson anticipates that the case, which Runeston's attorney has said will be appealed, will prompt many other dairymen nationwide to file similar claims against utility companies for stray voltage damages: "I'd estimate that there are 100 dairy farmers in Douglas County alone who feel they have legitimate stray voltage damage claims against their power supplier."