

Foot-and-Mouth Poses Threat to N.C. Hog Industry

By RACHEL COTTONE
Staff Writer

The recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Europe, especially England, is a major concern for the agricultural officials in North Carolina.

In England, large numbers of livestock have been slaughtered and then burned to control the epidemic - but the disease is still running rampant and has spread to mainland Europe and several other parts of the world.

Jerry Hostetter, vice president of corporate communications for North

Carolina-based Smithfield Foods, the country's largest pork producer, said the disease's contagious nature poses a threat to the state's livestock. "(Foot-and-mouth disease) is critically important because if it affected our livestock, it would be economically devastating."

State Veterinarian David Marshall said if foot-and-mouth disease struck North Carolina, the results would hit the state hard. "If it does (come to the United States), damage would be in the billions of dollars," he said.

Foot-and-mouth is a contagious viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed ani-

mals such as cattle, swine and sheep.

The disease spreads easily from animal to animal on crowded farms and is wind-borne, traveling long distances to carry the disease to distant farms.

Once exposed to the virus, livestock lose weight and dairy animals suffer reduced milk production. There is no effective treatment for the virus, which can result in death.

Although humans cannot become sick with foot-and-mouth disease, they can carry the virus.

Hostetter said Smithfield Foods is taking precautions to safeguard against the

disease.

Academic groups and visitors previously enjoyed relatively free access to the hog farms. Hostetter said visitor access has now been restricted.

He added that employees who travel abroad to inspect foreign products are quarantined for a month at desk jobs and are not allowed contact with the hogs.

Marshall said North Carolina is prepared if an outbreak were to occur. Buffer zones, quarantine and vaccinations are current prevention methods in place.

"We think the USDA has a well-thought emergency plan," he said. "We could limit the outbreak to the point where it can be controlled."

And this cloud does have a silver lining for hog producers. Because the United States has banned the importation of foreign meat, only domestic products will be put on the market.

Hostetter said the restriction on foreign sales will be an economic boost for the domestic meat market and Smithfield Foods. "It's a positive influence because it would be less supply and increase the sale of pork in this country."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Campus Calendar

Today

noon - The Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center presents, "Around the Circle: First-Aid Safety and Screening Fair."

Join EMT Delois McRae as she discusses first-aid. Have your blood pressure checked and get tested for diabetes.

3 p.m. - The initial meeting of the LSAT Preparation Group will take place in 104 Phillips Annex. Call 962-3782 for further information/registration. The course fee is \$100.

3:30 p.m. - Wondering what English course to take next semester?

Come get advice from those who know. The Association of English Majors presents peer advising in the Gaskin Library, Greenlaw Hall.

4:30 p.m. - The International Festival planning committee will meet in Union 220. All students are invited to help organize this year's "Dance of the World" Festival.

4:30 p.m. - Scott Harshbarger, president of Common Cause, will head a panel discussion on campus finance reform in the Freedom Forum Conference Room of Carroll Hall.

The town hall-style meeting will bring together a diverse panel of politicians, professors and citizens.

6 p.m. - The General Alumni Association Student Membership

Program will sponsor a "Tax Seminar for Students" in the Royall Room of the George Watts Hill Alumni Center.

Learn how to file your federal and state income tax returns as a student. 6 p.m. - The Wesley Foundation will have dinner, followed by a "Religion and Science" program.

7 p.m. - "Carolina Week" - real news by real students - features Nicole Brusik taking a look at how your group or team can unwind and build bonds at the very same time. The show will air on Chapel Hill cable Channel 4 or on campus on Channel 22. Catch it at the same time on the same channel Thursday and Friday.

7 p.m. - Come to dinner at Franklin Street Pizza & Pasta with a World War II pilot from Chapel Hill. Hear the story from a man who experienced it.

11 p.m. - As part of Children's Rights Week, Students for Educational Equality and Advocates for Children and Teens will sponsor a benefit concert at Carolina Coffee Shop, featuring the band Flux. All proceeds will benefit groups that work to fight child abuse.

The Daily Tar Heel

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

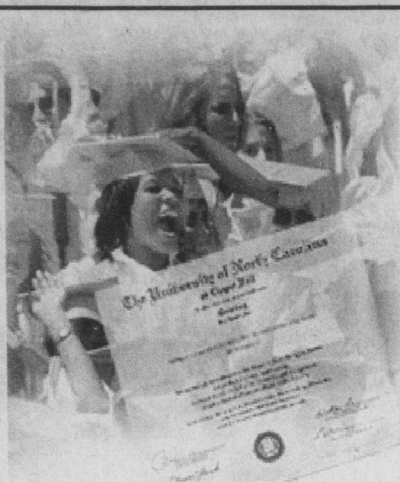
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Attention May Graduates

COMMENCEMENT INFORMATION DAY

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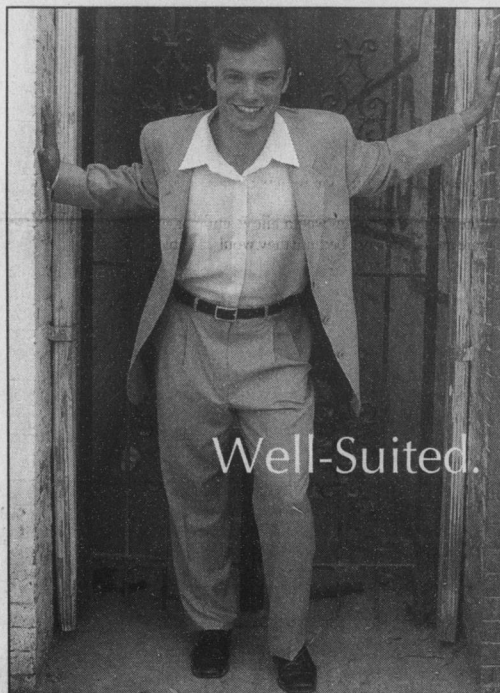


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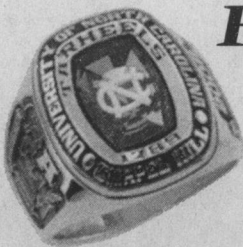
Carolina Ring Event

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