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Incidence of Bovine Leptospirosis in Iowa

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A survey of the incidence of bovine leptospirosis in 15 counties in Iowa was made using the rapid plate and capillary tube test as developed by Stoenner. A statistical correction technique was applied in an effort to approximate the true incidence.

Seven hundred and fifty-five or 2.5 per cent of the 30,289 samples tested at the laboratory were classified as positive. A herd was considered infected if at least one animal in the herd showed a titer of 1:160 or higher. A positive titer was considered an indication of active leptospirosis infection. Forty-five of the 144 infected herds were interviewed in regard to history, signs and vaccination. Thirty-eight per cent of these herds reported abortion as a sign of leptospirosis infection.

An attempt to find some relation between environmental factors such as soil pH, density of cattle population, density of hog population and the degree of infection was made. A slight correlation was found between a high incidence of leptospirosis in a county and the presence of a large number of farm ponds.

Rate of Infected Herds in 15 Representative Counties in Iowa—Average Rate 4.9%