

TUBERCULOSIS EPIDEMIC SPREADS

This week two more Tayside farms have reported outbreaks of tuberculosis in their cattle. Animals from both farms had previously been screened by vets from the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland and given the all clear. The DAFS team leader, Dr Melissa King, made an official statement to the press yesterday: "We are at the moment uncertain as to how this mistake occurred. We are currently undergoing an inquiry into our laboratory procedures, and as a precaution all animals will be re-tested for the disease."

Four farms have become contaminated with TB since the ill-fated Montrose Agricultural Show, where the first case was diagnosed and equine flu was also discovered in several horses. Whilst farms wait to be screened, Tayside is effectively under quarantine restrictions for the movement of cattle and horses. Farmers from outside the region are relieved that they did not bring their animals in for the event.

The original source of the infection has still not been traced, but in a bid to prevent further spread of the disease, DAFS officials have begun gassing badger setts around the infected farms. Badgers are known to be TB carriers and have been implicated in the contamination of cattle in the south west of England and the Republic of Ireland. Badger carcasses have been taken away for analysis and an investigation is also underway into the potential risks posed by other wildlife, particularly

rabbits, which have reached record numbers this year.

DAFS are coordinating all the operations from offices in the Veterinary Science Department, Dundee University. Dr King, once again stated that there was no need for the public to worry. "Modern pasteurisation techniques negate the risks of milk being contaminated by TB, and the majority of people will have been vaccinated against the disease as children. As soon as tuberculosis is detected in a herd, all the milk from that farm is destroyed." If you do not know whether you or your family have ever received a TB vaccination, you are advised to consult your local GP. There is an information line about TB and the outbreak available on Dundee 555472.

NAVY DIVERS INVESTIGATE WRECK

Royal Navy divers are currently investigating a site off Montrose which is rumoured to be the wreck of the "Red Lichtie", lost with all hands on 9th February this year.

It is generally believed around the Arbroath area that a submarine was the cause of the loss of two trawlers "Red Lichtie" and "Margaret", but no conclusive evidence has been forthcoming. A Danish and two Spanish vessels have also vanished in East coast waters in recent months. Both the British

and Danish government strenuously deny that their submarines were responsible for the sinkings. The official reason for the continuing presence of the minesweeper HMS Albion off Montrose and the flurry of diving activity associated with it is given as "a training exercise in underwater demolitions."

Alec Spink of the Arbroath Deep Sea Fishermen's Association has doubts about the Navy's claim. In an interview with our reporter he stated: "The fact that the Navy have not notified the local coastguard about the extent of this 'exercise', or recruited any experienced North Sea divers from the rig workers in Aberdeen to assist them indicates to me that they have got something to hide. I don't believe this 'training' nonsense for a instant. If it's not one of their subs, then I'm betting that they know fine who it does belong to and are simply covering it up."

A government inquiry into the trawler sinkings is not expected to deliver its verdict until late June.

NORTH EAST MAN GROWS GIANT MARROW!

Triumph at the Angus show and a place in the Guinness book of Records seems likely for George Addison of Carmyllie. He has grown a monster of a marrow in his greenhouse, so large that it is threatening to squash all its leafy neighbours.