

## FALL 1994 . . .

Five champion animals at the 1994 Ohio State Fair are disqualified due to positive tests for the illegal drug, clenbuterol. Three others are found to be tampered with in other ways.

Of 38 animals tested after the Tulsa State Fair in Oklahoma, six animals turn up positive for clenbuterol, a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) report shows.

## WINTER 1995 . . .

FDA collects eyeballs of market livestock after the American Royal in Kansas City. Tests show no clenbuterol in the steers or lambs. American Royal officials, however, find clenbuterol residues in a reserve champion hog after urine tests are conducted.

FDA issues a report stating that tissue from the grand and reserve grand champion steers at the 1995 National Western Stock Show in Denver tested positive for clenbuterol.

## SPRING 1995 . . .

The North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) executive committee rules on three ethic violations which occurred at the 1994 NAILE Junior Steer Show and Junior Wether Show in Louisville, Ky. Three animals were found to have been treated with clenbuterol. The drug was discovered through eyeball testing by USDA and FDA.

**EACH** incident by itself might be dismissed as just a few "bad apples" giving junior shows a bad rap. But as the reports of abuse keep coming in, the problem of drugs in the show ring just can't be ignored any longer.

Ohio Department of Agriculture officials hope the message they're sending is heard loud and clear — cheat and face criminal prosecution. Fifteen people, including five

In late March, both Denver exhibitors finally assumed full responsibility for the fact their animals tested positive at slaughter for the banned drug clenbuterol. They agreed to release all claims to auction proceeds on the animals, which totalled nearly \$50,000. Producers spend millions of dollars each year to promote the image of beef. The use of drugs by certain people in the industry can be likened to shooting our collective foot.

don't tolerate their behavior."

Positive steps have already been taken by livestock shows. Some shows divert premium monies to a college fund. "They pay \$10,000 up front and put the rest in a college fund for the exhibitor," Goodwin says. "We know that money is directed at the individual and not for a new truck or professional fitter."

Another solution to the problem of cheating is to eliminate the professional

# STEER GATE SCANDAL

*ILLEGAL DRUG USE AND UNETHICAL PRACTICES IN THE SHOW RING HAVE ROCKED THE BEEF INDUSTRY. SURVIVAL OF JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW PROGRAMS NOW DEPENDS ON LEGAL, EDUCATIONAL AND ETHICAL SOLUTIONS*

BY JULIE GRIMES ALBERTSON

professional fitters, were indicted on charges relating to livestock tampering at last year's Ohio State Fair. Nine individuals have been convicted so far. Punishment for two Ohio offenders includes serving prison terms. They will be banned from showing, buying or judging cattle.

Three offenders are also required to purchase a quarter-page advertisement in a national livestock publication to make a public confession. The advertisement must include their photos and a message that cheating does not pay in Ohio.

After the Denver scandal broke, officials at the National Western Stock Show were also intent upon probing illegal drug use. "The integrity of our junior livestock show must be protected by all means," says Patrick Grant, the show's president. "The National Western Stock Show intends to take strong steps to assure the honesty and fairness of future junior livestock shows."

Unfortunately with so much money involved, some people will use any means necessary to bring home the purple.

### A Silver Lining?

Jeff Goodwin, of the Texas A&M Extension Service, sees positive aspects resulting from all the headlines. "I think there's a silver lining from the controversy. Its gotten people off high center, and forced them to look at a problem that's been around," says Goodwin. "The issue of cheating in junior livestock shows has been a taboo subject for a long time. And we're the best friend of cheaters when we ignore the problem."

Some people have expressed to Goodwin concerns that talking about illegal drug use in the show ring is like airing dirty laundry for all the world to see. "I don't think so," he says. "I'd like to say this in front of the cameras — Most people are doing the right thing. We need to send a message to the cheaters that we

fitters or "steer jockeys" from the picture. "Some shows are going to a exhibitor-only fitting and trimming rule — putting the clippers back in the kids hands," Goodwin says. "I think if the program is going to survive, this will have to be part of the policy."

However, eliminating the professionals won't be easy in some areas of the country where the most powerful people use their services.

"That's why we work from the kids up in Texas," Goodwin says. "We let kids be the messenger by signing a Junior Livestock Exhibitors Code of Practice. It's not something they send in, it goes on the refrigerator door."

The exhibitor pledges not only to abstain from unethical behavior, but also to prevent any adult from using unethical means to alter their animal.

Goodwin has been instrumental in developing two videos addressing the problem of ethics in the show ring. "A Question of Ethics"

and "A Step Beyond A Question of Ethics" are both available for purchase by calling the Instructional Materials Service at Texas A&M University at (409) 845-6601. Cost of each video is \$55.

### No Simple Solutions

Committees are being formed at many junior livestock shows to try and come up with more solutions to the problem of livestock tampering. Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) Director Fred L. Dailey appointed an Ad Hoc Ohio Livestock Show Task Force. They have compiled an outline of changes to emphasize the educational focus of junior livestock shows and establish policies that will deter unethical practices.

Recommendations include:

- Enforcement of minimum length of ownership and custody for market class animals;
- Timely slaughter of grand champion and reserve grand champion hogs, lambs and steers at ODA or USDA licensed plants with close inspector oversight;
- Adoption of tampering and "Code of Practice" rules for livestock projects;
- Implementation of a Grand Champion Project in place of current system;
- Improvement of animal identification, including use of random DNA testing, nose prints, and tamper-proof ear tags.

### Livestock Show Reform Act

The Ohio Senate approved the Livestock Show Reform Act, a bill designed to toughen penalties for individuals who tamper with or sabotage exhibition animals, on May 17. The unanimous Senate vote follows the Ohio House of Representatives' 91-1 approval of the legislation on April 18. Governor Voinovich was expected to sign the legislation.

"I'm pleased that Ohio lawmakers acted quickly and approved this legislation," Dailey says. "This measure

## WHY IS CLENBUTEROL DANGEROUS?

Clenbuterol is a toxic drug that poses a health threat to humans who consume products still carrying even small amounts of the drug. The drug is banned for use in food animals worldwide.

Although no illness has been reported in the United States, in Europe at least five deaths and more than a thousand illnesses have been linked to illegal clenbuterol use.

Clenbuterol a type of steroid, is used because it causes an animal to rapidly add muscle mass and reduces fat tissue. It was developed in the Netherlands and is also known as a beta agonist. It is a bronchodilator which means it expands the bronchial tubes in the lungs.

It is legally available by prescription in Canada for treating respiratory problems in horses. It's marketed by Boehringer-Ingelheim Corp. under the brand name Ventipulmin.

## ANGUS MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

### Chad Rotenberger | Chairman, NJAA Board | Bismarck, N.D.

*The large sums of prize money at livestock shows give people motivation to cheat. The extra incentive to win -the money-needs to be partially eliminated.*

*With regards to 4-Hand FFA projects, leaders and other adults need to supervise more closely on the farm. I'd like to see kids take a more active role in their projects both at home and at the show.*

*When we had 4-H cattle it was our project, we did everything. Some kids at big shows don't even see the animal until they reach the showing.*

### David Nichols | Nichols Farms | Bridgewater, Iowa

*The 1919 World Series was rocked by scandal. The Chicago Black Sox players had accepted money to lose games. It nearly destroyed baseball and a movie was made about it. One of the scenes stands out in my mind. A little boy with tears streaming down his face approached Shoeless Joe Jackson, the star of baseball in that era, and pleaded Say it ain't so Joe. "*

*This past year many of the champion steers at state fairs and national livestock shows have tested positive to residues of illegal, dangerous steroids and surgical tampering. Like the boy in the movie, I feel like crying!*

*While the Beef Board spends \$42 million of beef producers' hard-earned checkoff money for promotion, these dishonest showjocks are hurting beef's image. It's a stretch to claim these events showcase the best young people and finest cattle in America. Honest people who choose to participate in cattle shows are being tainted. And if you think it's just show steers, wake up and smell the petunias! Breeding cattle and adults are involved. Cattle judges are sitting in jail today who used illegal steroids on show cattle. Make no mistake, good people do not want to be involved in an industry where animal abuse is considered the winning edge.*

*My partial solution is to simply require every market animal shown, from county fairs to national shows, be slaughtered, carcass measured, and tested for residues. Base the awards not only on the hoof but on carcass merit as well. The biggest prize would go to the best combination. Award the money in the form of scholarships.*

*I still believe in the old 4-H concept — the main goal is blue ribbon kids, not blue ribbon calves. Junior livestock shows can contribute, but not if we allow a few rotten apples to spoil the whole barrel.*

**The Angus Journal editorial department is seeking your opinion and solutions for eliminating cheaters and drug abusers in junior and open livestock shows.**

Please write or fax to: Editor, Angus Journal, 3201 Frederick Blvd., St. Joseph, MO 64506; Fax (816)233-6575

will permit us to stamp-out any smoldering embers that remain from last year's episodes. Other states, including Colorado and Oklahoma, are considering similar legislation to combat livestock tampering. I hope to see the bill signed into law before the gates open for the first county fair on June 16."

### The Reform Act:

Defines tampering and makes tampering a fourth degree felony, carrying a maximum of 18 months in prison and a \$2,500 fine. Subsequent occurrences of tampering would be treated as third degree felonies with up to 10 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Defines and prohibits sabotage of animals currently at or destined for an exhibition, punishable as a third degree felony.

Makes changes in the Ohio Drug Law to close loopholes regarding the use of illegal and unapproved drugs.

Grants ODA authority to promulgate mandatory statewide food safety and animal welfare rules and additional optional rules dealing with grooming practices.

Creates a 21-member advisory committee, composed of representatives of livestock commodity, fair, producer and farm organizations, who will meet yearly to advise the ODA on possible or statutory changes.

Allows the ODA to conduct adjudication hearings on alleged rule violation, if requested by the exhibition sponsors. This provision would buffer local fair societies from litigation and possible conflicts of interest when addressing problems the county fair level.

### It's up to You

Committees and task forces will be formed and many valuable solutions will be found. Somewhere in the mix, young people have to wrangle with the tough issues of ethics — doing the right thing even if it means going home without the purple ribbon and the big check. That decision is unquestionably easier to make if those kids have had good examples from parents and leaders. It's simple, we teach our children by our own actions.