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### NOTEBOOK

New USDA labeling regulations have narrowed the difference between labeled light beef and generic lean beef. That includes restrictions on labeling claims about reduced fat percentages of light beef.

"You can't say a specific brand of light beef is a certain percentage leaner than a competitive light beef product or conventionally labeled beef," Vantrease continues, noting that no standard defines normal beef. "Now, the fat content must be on the package."

Researchers say the premiums are worthwhile. In Wisconsin, for example, Kohler Farms' Lite Beef is displayed in meat counters side by side with USDA Choice beef. The light beef attracts buyers even though it is priced about 35% higher.

NO H wrote:

# OTHER MATTERS Purple Cow Causes Media Frenzy

The Associated Press and United Press International began the media madness.

The London Daily Telegraph and the BBC covered it, as did radio stations in New York, Philadelphia, and other major cities all over the U.S. ABC's Peter Jennings joined the fray by concluding his broadcast with the story. CNN included the news in its Indonesian broadcast.

Just what was this newsworthy event? The latest edict on the Middle East conflict? News on an updated version of the stealth bomber? No, but here's a hint: It was code-named

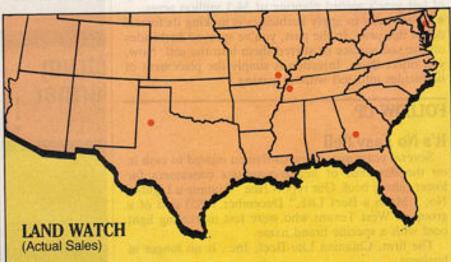
"Purple Cow."

That's what two Auburn University professors called their Far Sidelike research. Keith Cummins and Lawrence Myers found that licoricescented anise oil spritzed on dairy cows seemed to make the bovines less aggressive while they were being regrouped. The less stressed cows are, the more milk they produce.

So what attracted the media like

flies to a cow patty?

"One, it was serious science with useful results," explains Myers, director of Auburn's new Institute for Biological Detection Systems. "And two, it's funny. We made cows



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- Maryland Eastern Shore. 149 acres. 115 acres tillable. No buildings. Sold for \$165,000, or \$1,107 per acre.
- Southwest Georgia. 941 acres.
   900 acres cropland. 700 acres sprinkler irrigated. 385,000 pounds peanut quota. Sold for \$1,070,400, or \$1,138 per acre.

Sources: Farm Credit Banks of Baltimore, Farm Credit Services of Louisville, Chas. S. Middleton and Son, Lubbook, Tex.; Semmy C. Flagg and Chris Hawley, Equitable Agn-Business, Inc., Memphis, Tenn., region. smell runny.

Just what prompted this, ummm, unusual study? "We had a little spare time and some cows," Myers says. "It was done with minimal funding, to say the least-mostly just mileage the prose seemed to capture the costs ."

"In the first experiment, we painted them," cohort Cummins explains earnestly.

Cummins, an associate professor in the university's Department of Animal and Dairy Science, and Myers found that painting the Holsteins a nice solid black or white caused no change in milk production. So the researchers began tickling the bovines' noses with anise oil.

"Our running title on this thingwe don't know whether the Journal [of Dairy Science] will like it or notis 'Individual Recognition in Dairy Cattle: I've Never Seen a Purple Cow," Myers notes. "We start off the paper with the little poem, 'The Purple Cow.'"

For those who don't remember the

childhood ditty, it goes: "I never saw a purple cow, / I never hope to see one; / But I can tell you anyhow, / I'd rather see than be one."

Purple paint never was used, but whimsy of the research.

"Actually, being purple wouldn't be a problem. But smelling different seems to really upset cows," Cummins deadpans.

"Ours was animal experimentation which caused absolutely no stress or strain to the cow," Myers says, just as solemnly. A brief pause, then he adds the punch line: "Except possibly embarrassment."

All cow jokes aside, they point out that the research really can be used by dairy producers. But they warn against using the "perfume" on cows in breeding herds. The oil seems to block estrus behavior.

Chemical supply houses sell anise oil for about \$130 a liter, which can be diluted to about 5 gallons.

What, pray tell, is next on their

research agenda? "We've been looking at aggression in pigs," Cummins muses. The headline fairly writes itself: Perfumed Porkers Pack On Plenty of Pounds.

# NOTED AND QUOTED

- "They need a section of land in the family, free and clear, bottomline. Or they need a ring on the finger of someone with a section of land, free and clear."-Kansas State University ag economist Barry Flinchbaugh relating what he tells students on whether they should return to the family farm.
- · "At home, I can hardly get my car into the garage for all the bins and bags that are lined up to collect paper, brown glass, green glass, aluminum cans, and plastic."-Dale A. Miller, president and CEO of Sandoz Crop Protection Corp., contending that today, everybody considers himself an environmentalist.

# BEKAERT

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