

Probes at Detrick Seen as Unreliable

By John Hanrahan
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Rep. Richard D. McCarthy (D-N.Y.) contended yesterday that neither the Army nor Frederick County health officials could be relied upon to investigate objectively the mysterious malady that has afflicted more than 230 cows near Ft. Detrick.

In calling for the Federal Government to offer definitive proof that biological warfare activities at Ft. Detrick are not responsible for deaths and illness in the cows, McCarthy said:

"I don't believe we can rely on either the Army or the county health officials to be watchdogs in this area. I think it's obvious. The Army has a vested interest in continuing its program and, for Frederick County, Ft. Detrick is a major factor in the area's economy."

Ft. Detrick, the Nation's biological warfare research and development center, employs

some 2800 military and civilian personnel and pumps an estimated \$25 million a year into the Frederick economy. Detrick has repeatedly denied it is responsible for the cows' illness.

Since 1962 farmer John H. Hall has reported that more than 80 cows have died and more than 150 others on his farm have become sterile or so ill they have had to be destroyed.

Although many theories are offered as to the causes of the illnesses, autopsies performed over the last few years have been inconclusive. Hall's farm is on the Monocacy River, just downstream from the Detrick sewage treatment plant.

McCarthy, a leading critic of germ warfare research, listed two examples that he said raise "serious questions" about Detrick's responsibility in the Hall farm case.

He cited testimony at a Congressional hearing by Dr. D. A. Osguthorpe, a Salt Lake City veterinarian who helped determine that the Army's errant test of nerve gas caused the deaths of 8400 sheep in Utah near Dugway Proving Ground.

Osguthorpe testified that there also had been a mysterious disease present in newborn calves in the Dugway area. The doctor said his "theory is that this is a toxin, a biological agent." Citing this, McCarthy said "it is a well known fact that the Army at Ft. Detrick has experimented with toxins—including botulinus and staphylococcus toxins."

McCarthy also cited a 1959 purchase of 20 acres near the Pine Bluff (Ark.) Arsenal, which is Detrick's sister biological warfare facility. Testimony at the time showed that toxic wastes generated by the facility had contaminated small stream leading from the base to the Arkansas River.

The Army explained at the time, McCarthy said, that possible future problems could be avoided by buying the land and fencing it off to keep livestock away. This land purchase and the testimony on the calves near Dugway both may be pertinent to the Hall farm case, he said.