

Cattle Deaths Noted Near Ft. Detrick

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FREDERICK, Md., June 24—A farmer whose land is downstream from the Ft. Detrick biological warfare center here has complained that a mysterious ailment has caused the loss of more than 200 head of his cattle in the last seven years.

The fort issued a statement today that it has investigated and found "there is no evidence to indicate that Ft. Detrick's waste material is in any way connected with these cattle deaths."

The statement was sparked by the complaint of John H. Hall, a 46-year-old bachelor who leases a 670-acre farm on Gas House Pike, east of Frederick and east of the Monocacy River.

His complaint came to light in a letter he wrote recently to Rep. Richard D. McCarthy (D-N.Y.), a leading critic of the Nation's chemical and biological warfare programs.

Hall said that he decided to write McCarthy "as a way of getting things started." However, he refused to place the blame for his troubles on Ft. Detrick.

In the last seven years, Hall said, 80 of his cattle—of which 50 were heifers—have died. Another 150 heifers had to be sold for meat, he said, after they became ill and sterile

and could no longer bear calves or give milk. He estimated his loss at \$120,000 for the seven-year period.

Hall's attorney, Benjamin Rosenstock, has filed civil suits for damages against a feed company claiming faulty feed, and a water service company, for an allegedly deficient chlorinator placed in the well.

Rosenstock, a part-owner of Hall's farm, said that Detrick is not to blame for Hall's problems.

Rosenstock said that Hall's problems have occurred in three stages. He attributed the initial cattle deaths seven years ago to DDT that was sprayed on citrus fruit in Florida and that later became part of the feed Hall was using. The second phase of the problem occurred about 18 months ago and was due to a faulty chlorinator, he said. The third phase, more recently, he said, was due to bad urea (an animal waste product added to feed for its nitrogen content) in the dairy feeds.

Col. E. M. Gerstater, commanding officer of Ft. Detrick, said that the fort's investigation was performed by the post's Industrial Health and Safety Directorate. He said the study involved, in part, a review of all the samplings of water that have been taken from the Monocacy twice a week since 1961.