



Senior Oscar Flores and Major General Harry H. Johnson, co-directors of the joint commission fighting foot-and-mouth, plot their strategy. The map shows the battleground. Orange is for areas in which one inoculation has been made, green for two or three, and white for those not yet penetrated

# CRUSADE

## *In Mexico*

By FRANCIS SILL WICKWARE

Nearly 4,000 Americans and Mexicans are waging a winning war against the foot-and-mouth epidemic that once threatened our own great cattle industry. The hard fight has greatly improved U.S.-Mexican relations

22

OFFHAND, a sick cow doesn't seem like much of a symbol for international collaboration. You'd be more likely to select a pair of clasped hands, or a dove with an olive branch in its beak, or some other familiar stereotype.

But down in Mexico a sick cow has come to represent a long step forward in relations between the United States and Mexico, and a unique international partnership without precedent in peacetime.

The warm partnership was born of a bitter struggle against a common enemy, foot-and-mouth disease. At a cost of \$500,000 a week to Uncle Sam, the advance of the epidemic toward the U.S. border has not only been halted but the danger has been pushed back more than 100 miles from the high-water mark.

Why should Uncle Sam be spending so much money a week south of the border for veterinary treatment of Mexican cattle? Why shouldn't the Mexicans do the paying?

Why? Because if Mexico's three-year-old epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease ever got across the border into the United States, it would cost Uncle Sam \$10,000,000 a week to defeat it.

The invasion threat caused Uncle a good many sleepless nights. Money would be well spent, he finally decided, if he could stop the enemy somewhere south of the Rio Grande. So he made a deal with Mexico, two and a half years ago, to go fifty-fifty on a life-and-death battle with this economically ruinous infection, which the Mexicans call *aftosa*.

It is believed that the disease started at a Gulf

Collier's for August 20, 1949

Coast port with the importation of two zebu bulls from Brazil, but by the time the deal was made it was advancing northward like a forest fire. It was already within 250 miles of Texas.

Quite a lot of people—experts and important cattlemen—thought the struggle to push it back was hopeless. For years the U.S. Department of Agriculture had been telling the cattlemen that killing was the only answer to foot-and-mouth. But in Mexico the disease had already spread over an area as big as Texas, infecting millions of cattle. To be successful, a continuation of the slaughtering program which had been started would have meant the extermination of all cloven-hoofed livestock in central Mexico and the subsequent collapse of the country's agriculture. Moreover, a million of the cattle owners were Indians living in wild and remote terrain. They didn't even speak Spanish, but used 50 different obscure dialects of their own. They couldn't understand the program and opposed it by every means in their power.

### Couldn't Pay for the Slaughter

Uncle Sam listened to all this but still felt he had to do what he could to protect his border. The Mexican government needed help to make the slaughtering program even moderately effective. The main difficulty was financial; the government lacked money to reimburse farmers for the loss of slaughtered animals.

As a starter the United States agreed to help finance these payments; it also promised barbed wire for quarantine lines, which the Mexican army would patrol. Furthermore, Washington promised to supply some trained personnel and equipment. The two nations organized a Joint Mexican-United States Commission for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease, better known south of the border as the Aftosa Commission.

When the American veterinarians came into the picture they soon saw that the slaughtering program was getting nowhere. Although nearly 1,000,000 head had been killed, the disease continued to spread faster than the slaughter crews could wipe

out the sick herds, and meanwhile the whole economy of the cattle country was threatened.

Out in the range areas Mexican officials were meeting with an opposition they could not quell. When they asked the peons to round up their sick animals the natives responded by hiding their herds in the hills.

To the small farmer in Mexico, an ox or goat is not just an economic asset but practically a member of the family. The animals are cared for at least as well as the children and frequently share the families' dwelling quarters. Cash payment struck the peons as poor compensation for the loss of well-loved companions. One of the commission's men said to me, "In village after village we tried to explain the necessity for slaughter, only to be told, 'You don't kill us when we get sick. Why then kill our animals?' Or, 'God gave us our animals; only He will take them away.'"

Meanwhile the commission's scientific experts were combing the world for some alternative to the slaughtering program. They learned that in Europe, where foot-and-mouth has been prevalent for many generations, new vaccines were proving fairly effective in Holland and Switzerland. Samples of these vaccines were imported and tested.

Some of them proved utter failures; others seemed to confer a brief immunity. Generally, however, they were not powerful enough to fight the virulent and active type of the disease which had broken out in Mexico.

To manufacture the vaccines, healthy animals were inoculated with the virus of *aftosa*; at the proper stage of the disease they were slaughtered and the vaccine was extracted from their tongues.

The Aftosa Commission decided to make its own vaccine, on the theory that its product would have greater potency than those produced from the attenuated form of the disease prevalent in Europe.

It took time to develop the techniques and to test the product. But the new vaccine worked—and immediately laboratory facilities were enlarged and speeded up for large-scale operations.

Today there are 900-odd Americans working alongside three times as (Continued on page 68)



Millions of posters and leaflets have been used in educating cattle owners to accept the vaccination program and to follow protective sanitation rules

COLOR PHOTO FOR COLLIER'S BY DAN NUÑEZ



Nearly 1,000,000 cattle were killed in an effort to halt the disease before the commission began to use a vaccine which produces comparative immunity. Today 50,000 square miles of the cattle country have been decontaminated  
Collier's for August 20, 1949



Field crews made more than 13,000,000 inoculations in their first year. One shot produces immunity to Aftosa (Mexican name for foot-and-mouth) for four months and it is hoped a series of three will establish permanent immunity

# The Legal



**The Story:** The first law case she had ever handled landed ABIGAIL JANE FURNIVAL in the most romantic, though exasperating, circumstances of her prim young life. At the suggestion of MR. GRAVES, a business manager for celebrities, who had an office across from Abigail's in the Fogarty Building in Beverly Hills, Abigail agreed to take as a client the debonair BEN CASTLE, a cowboy movie star and Hollywood playboy. Ben owed a sixty-thousand-dollar gambling debt to HARRY KALLEN, a night-club owner with underworld connections, who threatened violence against the cowboy unless the debt was paid. Abigail and Ben flew to Las Vegas in an effort to reach a settlement with Kallen. They were piloted by JACK HALL, a young aviator who looked upon Ben as a wastrel and who promptly fell in love with Abigail. But she was already in love with Ben, who persuaded her to marry him in a quickly arranged ceremony. Later, Kallen told Abigail he would take no action against Ben as long as they stayed happily married. Abigail realized that Ben and Mr. Graves had counted on Kallen's having kind feelings toward her because the gambler had once been saved from a jail sentence by Abigail's father, the late Vincent Furnival. Furious at the deception, Abigail refused to live with Ben when they returned to Beverly Hills. But on the urging of her roommate, a beautician named ALICE NORMAN, she went to Ben's home in Bel Air and told him she would stay on a strictly platonic basis, if he would reform his reckless way of life. After announcing her ultimatum, Abigail retired to her own room.

## PART FOUR OF SIX PARTS

**N**EXT morning ushered in what Abigail was pleased to refer to afterward, in recollecting it, as the "rat-race" stage of her marriage. The previous part of her life had been in rather slow motion, with a few high points connected by long flat spells. Now everything consisted of pinnacles, the action speeded up to an impossible pace, and you simply couldn't take your eyes off what was happening.

She awakened at eight thirty, and showered and dressed in nervous haste. As she applied lipstick in front of a mirror, there was a knock on the door.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"Nacio," Nacio said.

"Come in, Nacio."

He stood in the doorway and bowed to her smilingly. "Have breakfast in room?"

"No, I'll come down," Abigail said. "Is Mr. Castle up yet?"

"Always sleep late," Nacio explained. "Always have breakfast in room."

"Okay," Abigail said. "He's entitled to one last dream."

She descended to the first floor, and Nacio directed her to a terrace at the back. The fog of the preceding day was gone, the sun shone bright and fair, and birds rustled and sang in a near-by tree. Lighting a cigarette, she strolled about the grounds while Nacio ordered her breakfast and arranged the table. The Castle estate covered a couple of acres, part of it hillside attractively planted and terraced, and dotted with tall sycamore trees. It had a separate detached guesthouse, a tennis court and a swimming pool.

Nacio called her to breakfast, and she returned to the terrace and sat down with a feeling of luxurious pleasure. But the breakfast was terrible. Abigail's scrambled eggs were thick and curdled, her bacon uncrisp and her toast soggy. The coffee tasted as if it had been recently drained from an automobile crankcase. She ate little, inspected the greasy

ILLUSTRATED BY STAN KLIMLEY