

Farm Tribune

Poison algae pollutes pond



Dr. Denis O'Connor, Stouffville (left) holds out a heifer while veterinary student, Ian McKay photographs areas where symptoms of algae poisoning are visible.

By Jim Thomas

GOODWOOD Like science-fiction movies? You know the kind - where suddenly, without warning, a slimy kind of organic substance emerges from the sea to victimize a guy and his girl, stretched out on the sand.

I do. And all the while I'm sitting there, watching this great glob of jelly-like substance do its dirty work, I ask myself - could such a thing ever occur in real life?

It can cause the most cynical T.V. viewer to shudder at the thought.

And I shuddered, Friday, as I stood at the edge of a farm pond, near Goodwood in Uxbridge Township. For there, in reality, was death itself, just as any Fright-Night producer might have envisioned it.

The killer scum or algae covered the entire pond area, more highly concentrated in some sections than in others. It changed locations with the change of winds.

I was not alone in this self-appointed assignment. With me, also staring into the murky depths was a seasoned veterinarian and a senior college student, eager to seek out the source of the problem and discover a solution. Each of us offered opinions as to what had actually happened to make this harmless under-water vegetation suddenly run wild. All admittedly were guesses, some educated, some not.

The known toll up to that time was seven cattle dead and 42 others under



Seven cattle have died after drinking water from this farm pond, poisoned by toxic algae, on the property of Stanley Feasby, conc. 4, Uxbridge Twp. Stouffville veterinarian, Dr. Denis O'Connor checks the site.



Ian McKay, a senior student of the Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph, photographs one of several Holstein heifers infected by algae poisoning.

observation. But the total will never be known. For all around the water's edge were footprints of deer, raccoons, wild ducks and gulls, all attracted to the site by the scene of peaceful privacy. Too late they would learn of the agonizing death almost certain to follow. But why algae poison in this particular pond? Why this particular year? These are the answers the experts feel, will be found inside test tubes and under microscopes.

4-H conference delegates

ONTARIO COUNTY Fifteen delegates from Ontario County will attend the Regional 4-H Conference to be held at Trent University in Peterboro, July 1, 2 and 3.

Representatives from Uxbridge will be Gerry Assink, Arlene Hackner and Rick Campsall. From Clarendon, Doug Dunkled; Sunderland, Paul Hadden and Paul Harder; Beaverton, Frank Mangan and George Hewitt; Brechin, Randy Warren

and Jeff Windatt; Whitby, Don Guthrie; Port Perry, Don Knight and Mary Jane Crosier; Pickering, Ken Black; and Ajax, Brian Connor.

Alex Leask of Uxbridge 2 will represent the county 4-H clubs at the 4-H Science Seminar, to be held at the University of Guelph, June 28 - 30.

Jim Ross, Uxbridge 2, and Bruce Smith, Port Perry 2, will attend the Provincial 4-H Leadership Conference.

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