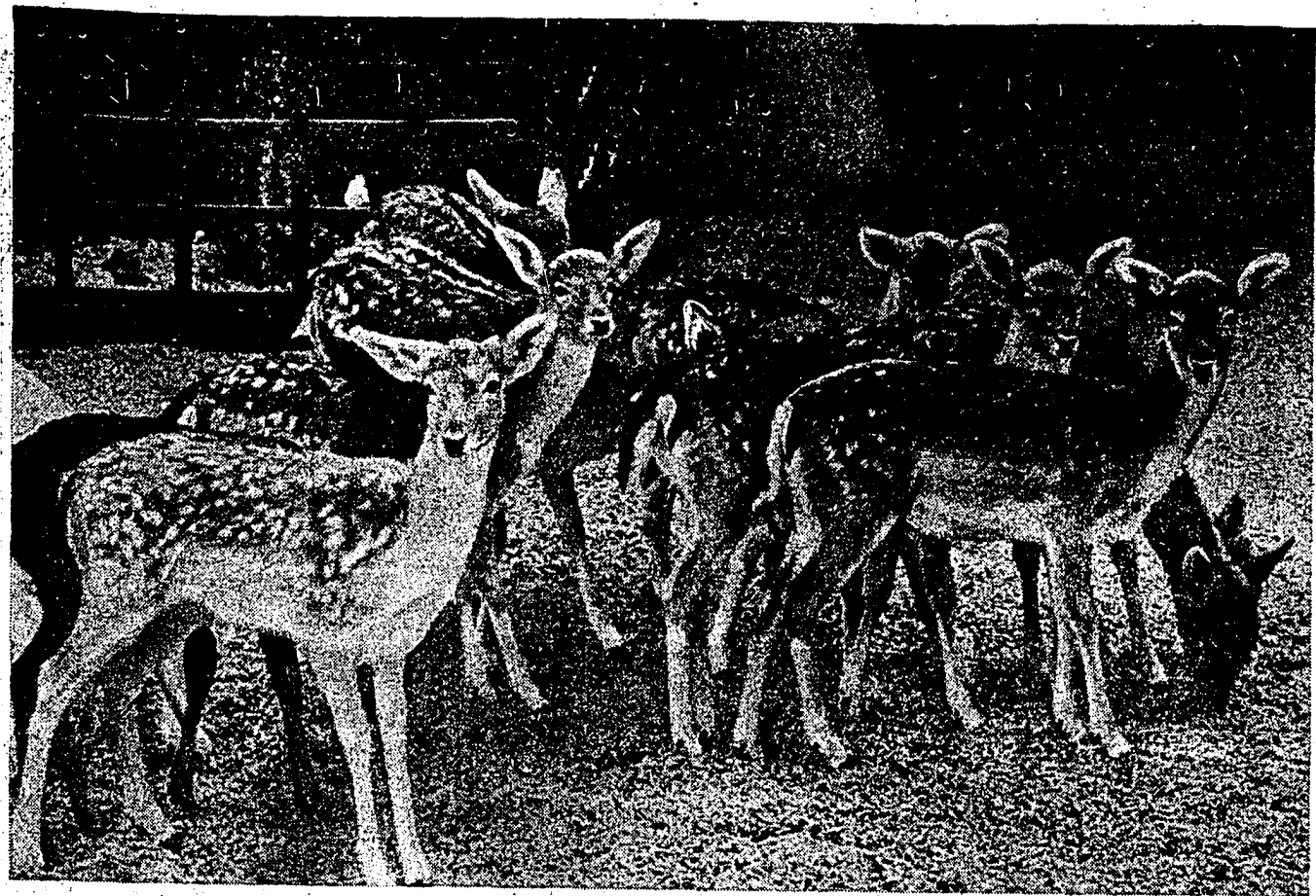


Japanese Village Deer Offered Home at Lion Country

GEORGE GETZE

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NEW LEASE ON LIFE -Healthy deer at Japanese Village in Buena Park may get a home at Lion Country Safari's animal park in Irvine.
Times photo by Cliff Otto

141 STILL ALIVE

Japanese Village Deer Offered Home at Lion Country

BY GEORGE GETZE
Times Staff Writer

Spokesman for Lion Country Safari said Wednesday the Orange County animal park will accept all deer from Japanese Village that have negative reactions to TB tests.

That might save the lives of about half the remaining herd of sika and fallow deer kept at the Buena Park amusement center that announced last week that it had shut down because of financial troubles.

A representative of Six Flags Inc., operators of Japanese Village, said the company would be happy to transfer the negative-reaction deer to Lion Country Safari, but no definite arrangement has been made.

One hundred seventy-seven of the deer were destroyed Tuesday by injecting them with a chlorine compound that kills quickly and painlessly. All 177 had reacted positively to the tuberculin test.

One hundred forty-one deer remain, and the representative of Six Flags said they have to be tested before the negatives can be transferred to Lion Country Safari or anywhere else. The positives will be disposed of as the other 177 were, he said.

Pat Quinn, corporate zoological director of the Lion Country chain of animal parks, said all the deer that eventually may be accepted at the Orange County park would be quarantined for 60 days even though they were negative reactors.

"Reacting negatively to one test, or even to several tests given over a long period, is not always proof of freedom from tuberculosis," Quinn said.

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Lion Country Offers to Take All Healthy Deer

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Negative reactions obtained in a series of tests administered over a two-month period, however, would show tuberculosis was not present. Deer that passed these tests while in quarantine at Lion Country Safari would be distributed among other animal parks in the chain. Deer that showed a positive reaction in tests subsequent to transfer would be destroyed.

Transfer might prove especially important for the surviving fallow deer, a species that has been considered endangered.

Dr. John Philp, Orange County health officer, said the tubercular deer were no threat to human health.

Philp said deer are subject to two kinds of tuberculosis. One is the kind commonly found in cows and other ruminant (cud-chewing) animals. Milk cows that react positively to the TB tests are always killed.

The other kind of TB to which deer are subject is avian tuberculosis, so named because it is common in birds.

The lymph nodes and intestinal tract, not the lungs, are the organs principally affected in deer, Dr. Philp said.

He said there had been a health problem among the Japanese Village deer herd for some time, and that the department had ordered the periodic testing for TB.

It was the State Bureau of Animal Health that ordered separation of the positive-reacting deer from the negatives that were on public display.

Dr. Hyman Parrell, the veterinarian in charge of the Los Angeles office of the state bureau, a division of the Food and Agriculture Department, said it was unfair to blame the owners of Japanese Village for destroying the positive-reacting deer.

The quarantined deer that had positive reactions could not be sold, and it was even found impossible to sell those that had reacted negatively, Parrell said.

He estimated it would cost between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a month to maintain the infected herd.

Parrell said the Bureau of Animal Health had no objection to the deer being moved, either to a place where "euthanasia" could be performed or to some quarantined area where

experimental drugs could be used on those that proved tubercular.

Two drugs that have been successful in treating human tuberculosis are now being experimented with in animal tuberculosis, Dr. Parrell said.

The drugs are isoniazid, which has worked a revolution in the treatment of human tuberculosis, and rifampin, a drug that is now being used in conjunction with isoniazid.

Two Southern California veterinarians suggested Wednesday that the remainder of the Japanese Village herd, both positive and negative reactors, be taken to an isolated, double-fenced ranch in the Santa Ana Mountains for study and experimentation with the two drugs.

It would cost about \$600 a month to maintain and treat 150 deer, they said, and would be an impossible task without a substantial research grant from an interested drug company.

The combination of rifampin and isoniazid has been tested on ruminants at the University of Michigan with inconclusive results.

A veterinarian said the drugs had somewhat better results when used at a European zoo recently to try to save the lives of tubercular orangutans, an animal much more closely related to man than deer.

A Lion Country Safari representative said the animal park had offered to take the bears and koi fish at Japanese Village as well as the negative-reacting deer.

The original offer was made last week when it was learned that Japanese Village had shut down. No answer to the original offer was received, it was reported.

Ralph Clark, chairman of the County Board of Supervisors, said Wednesday that the county could probably take all the deer that turned out to be free of tuberculosis and place them in O'Neill and Irvine Parks after a period of quarantine.