

Benson Urges Farmers to Use Precautions Against Crop Disaster

Farmers can and should protect themselves against financial disaster resulting from crop losses, Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson said today.

Increasing numbers are safe guarding their income through crop insurance or other income protection but, the Secretary noted, "these numbers still represent only a small percentage of all farmers."

"Each year disaster and crop losses strike thousands of farmers," the Secretary said. "Of course we are always deeply concerned with such misfortune when it comes — but what we can do, after losses occur, is limited. Each farmer, by acting now, can get crop insurance or other income protection."

After the disastrous drought, floods and other causes of crop losses in recent years, farmers this year have offered almost 50 per cent more Acreage Reserve



EZRA TAFT BENSON

cropland than the \$500 million which Congress appropriated would cover.

Farmers can still put land in Conservation Reserve, which is another form of income insurance. It is available to farmers growing every kind of field crop in every state.

Secretary Benson urged that "producers farming high risk croplands, or who have impaired family situations such as old age or poor health, or who have inefficient acreages, should consider putting their cropland into the Conservation Reserve before the final sign-up date, April 15. County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation offices can provide information about the Conservation Reserve."

All-risk Federal Crop Insurance for 1958 is available to farmers in many counties. Secretary Benson urged farmers in these counties to apply for crop insurance before the closing dates. This is the 20th anniversary of that basic protection against crop disaster.

"Farmers in more than 800 counties have the opportunity to use this crop investment insurance," the secretary said. "Although still on a test basis, it has become increasingly apparent in recent years that its basic function of stabilizing crop production capital — banked or borrowed — needs to be more fully utilized."

"Where crop disaster strikes both farmers and the business community feel the need for emergency assistance. Crop insurance has been developed to meet this need on a business basis."

"Farmers in counties where crop insurance is available will in effect be saying 'no emergency assistance against crop disaster needed' if they pass up the opportunity to become Federal Crop Insurance Corporation policyholders," the Secretary said.

During the past 20 years Federal Crop Insurance has paid nearly a half billion dollars of indemnities. These insurance checks have enabled many farmers to survive crop disasters which otherwise would have put them out of business. By its nature crop insurance relieves financial stress when the need is greatest — where there is little or no crop to sell.

"Federal Crop Insurance is not protection that is offered gratis, it is an insurance plan for mutual protection against common risks to which the best farms and methods are not immune. It is a self-help method whose success in any county reflects the willingness of farmers to prepare today for what can happen tomorrow," the secretary said.

"The indemnities paid reflect the fact that it is a very high risk field of insurance. The 1957 citrus experience illustrates this point. For six years citrus policy holders paid a half million dollars for protection with few losses but 1957 citrus indemnity checks alone will total nearly three-quarters of a million dollars."

"Crop insurance operation and service can be strengthened by more farmers joining this cooperative plan," he said. "It is

Tent Caterpillars May Move Soon From Winter Quarters to Shade Trees

Although snow lingers as winter's reminder in some areas, the State Department of Agriculture says it isn't too early to take a look at those nearby wild cherry trees for bothersome tent caterpillars.

Dr. Thomas L. Guyton, director of the State Bureau of Plant Industry, suggested homeowners inspect the crotches of wild cherry trees during the next week. He said after April 1 it might be too late. The pests also attack unsprayed plum and apple trees.

Tent caterpillars are capable of delimiting shade and ornamental trees. In certain areas they have been found in such

large numbers that one department official remarked they looked like an army marching shoulder to shoulder.

On or about April 1 eggs that were deposited last fall will hatch. Egg masses now can be found clumped together by a sticky substance in a collar like formation on the end of twigs. Each mass contains between 200 and 350 eggs.

The caterpillars will spin a silky web in tree crotches. This will be their home for the duration of the feeding period. This web will be noticed within the next several weeks and should be destroyed by wiping it from the tree with a broom or by hand. Once the web is destroyed the caterpillars will die.

Tent caterpillars crawl from the web like nest to feed on leaves. The pests as a rule can be found 'at home' in the early morning, at night and on cool days.

Spraying is effective, Doctor Guyton said. One spray of 50 per cent wettable DDT or 25 per cent wettable malathion will control the pests for the entire year.

truly a farmers' program. The premiums they pay for protection provide the funds for loss payments where disaster strikes."

Crops on which insurance is currently offered in more than 800 counties are wheat, corn, cotton, tobacco, flax, soybeans, dry edible beans, barley, peaches, citrus fruit and a few additional crops under a combination policy.

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