

Tests Show Soil Nutrient Reductions from Agnes Minimal

Tropical Storm Agnes affected crop production in all parts of the state, however, in most cases, changes in fertility programs will not be necessary to restore the soil to its former yield potential, an Extension agronomist at The Pennsylvania State University stated.

Dr W Wayne Hinish, speaking at the annual Vegetable Growers and Food Processors Conference last week, pointed out that test reports indicate that most soils retained their nutrients in spite of the severe flood conditions.

"The most important thing a farmer can do is have a complete soil test taken of all flooded areas," Dr Hinish said "If the topsoil was eroded but a workable subsoil exists, an application of the needed elements following test recommendations can bring this soil back to a productive capacity."

Organic matter, he said, is essential in rebuilding flood ravaged soil. Animal manures at a rate of 15 to 30 tons per acre should be plowed down. He cautioned that when manure is used, less chemical fertilizer is needed because it contains many of the needed soil elements. Plowing down roots, stalks, and

whole plants is probably the most feasible method of adding the lost organic matter.

"In severely damaged fields, there are three steps to follow to return the soil to a productive potential," the agronomist emphasized "These are removal of debris, control of new weeds introduced into the area, and restoration of the sand, silt, and clay complex."

Dr. Hinish noted that a major problem encountered this past growing season was the lack of air in the soil. Flooded soils had the air forced out as they became saturated.

Another serious situation took

place when flood waters forced nitrogen from the soil into the atmosphere is a gaseous state. This caused crop yellowing and stunted growth.

"The agronomist also noted that following Agnes, many crops began to curl. This was a result of a lack of oxygen in the soil which prohibited plants from receiving calcium.

"I want to emphasize that the elements vital to crop growth probably were not lost by leaching, however, a soil test is essential in determining whether damage to the soil structure occurred," Dr. Hinish said.

Sec. Butz Explains Rise in Food Price

Agriculture Secretary Earl L. Butz said Tuesday that the cost of eating jumped 2 to 3 per cent in January for the sharpest monthly gain in 20 to 25 years.

"Consumers are being misled about farm prices by big city newspapers and the urban press," he told an agricultural outlook conference.

Butz said the January rise, to be disclosed in a forthcoming report by the Labor Department, will be interpreted by some reporters as an annual rate of 24 to 36 percent in consumer food bills.

Such a projection, Butz said, "is grossly unfair," and does not take into account seasonal variations and volatility of farm prices.

"That use of statistics is like saying if you have a cold this week it is at the annual rate of 52 colds a year," Butz said. "This kind of arithmetic is preposterous, and the urban newspapers ought to know better."

A new Consumer Price Index, to be issued soon by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, will probably show an increase in January food prices of "2 to 3 percent or something like that," Butz said.

The Agriculture Department has predicted that retail food prices will rise about 6 percent for all of 1973, the most in 22 years, compared with a 4.3 percent gain in 1972.

"During the last two months we had seasonal winter time rises in farm prices, largely due to weather and transportation shortages," Butz said.

UDIA Unveils New Brochure


"A United Dairy Industry Action" is the title of a new brochure published by the United Dairy Industry Association (UDIA) which was unveiled for the first time at the Association's Annual Meeting in Las Vegas February 13. The publication is intended for wide circulation to dairy industry leaders throughout the country to inform them about UDIA and its activities.

UDIA is a dairy farmers' organization. Its purpose is "to increase the income of dairy farmers through the most effective and efficient use of their

investment in the coordinated promotion of U.S.-produced milk and milk products."

It is supported and governed by dairy farmers through their leaders who represent the regional and local organizations on the Association's Board of Directors. The direct concern of these leaders for UDIA programs assures dairy farmers that they will receive the greatest market-building effort for their investment, says the brochure.

Copies of the new brochure may be obtained free of charge by writing UDIA at 6300 North River Road, Rosemont, Illinois 60018.



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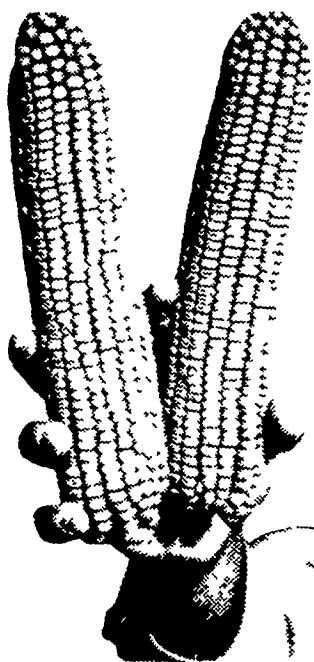
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