

# Winter-kill of grain fields assessed

COLLEGE PARK Md. — Some fields of winter oats, barley and wheat still look dubious, reports Joseph L. Newcomer, Extension agronomist at the University of Maryland, here.

Newcomer urges farmers to check their fields carefully and make a decision within the next week or two about possible replanting to another crop.

If it hasn't been done already, immediate top-dressing with a high nitrogen fertilizer is also recommended. This procedure will give zip to the developing small grain, and it will be of benefit even if the field is replanted to corn. Apply at the rate of 30 to 40 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre.

There is one exception to this advice, however, Newcomer warned. Don't top-dress a field with high-nitrogen fertilizer if you have definite plans to replant with long-season soybeans.

The Maryland Extension specialist offered this rule-of-thumb for farmers trying to decide whether they

should replant a field of small grain:

Don't replant if there seems to be a population of at least 112 plants per square foot. Even a population as low as six plants per square foot might make a decent crop of oats, barley or wheat under ideal circumstances with plenty of fertilizer, he commented.

Replanting with Spring wheat is not recommended anywhere in Maryland.

Spring barley is not recommended for any area of the state except Garret and Allegheny Counties, he notes, and Spring oats should be planted only north and west of a line between Washington, D. C., Baltimore and Elkton. But even in these areas, the Spring seeding should be done immediately.

Otherwise, corn and soybeans are the recommended crops where it is deemed advisable to replant fields of small grain.

A final factor to consider in making a decision to replant Winter-damaged small grain is the weed situation,

Newcomer cautioned. If the current population of newly emerged perennial and annual weeds like garlic, corncockle or cowcockle, ragged-robin, corn chamomile, chickweed, kawel (German moss), daisies and dogfennel (mayweed) numbers more

than six per square foot, forget about trying to save the small grain.

Rather, make plans to control the weeds by diking an application of proper herbicides in connection with plans to grow corn or soybeans in the affected field.

## USDA efficiency scored

Washington-Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland recently directed agency administrators to begin an "immediate review" of all Washington office agriculture personnel to determine whether the work they do "can be terminated, combined with other work, or streamlined and simplified."

Bergland said the purpose was "to operate the government as efficiently and effectively as possible with the minimum number of federal employees."

The secretary said he did not plan any reductions in force. "We are convinced that through attrition and reassignment we can continue to carry out our work without disrupting operations internally or diminishing the services provide the public," he said.

Agency administrators were asked to report by April 15 the number of positions, or jobs, that could be eliminated, plus any recommendations they wished to submit on reorganization of their agencies. New job ceilings will be established for each agency as a result of this review, he said.

Mr. Bergland said the review may be extended later to include regional and state offices.

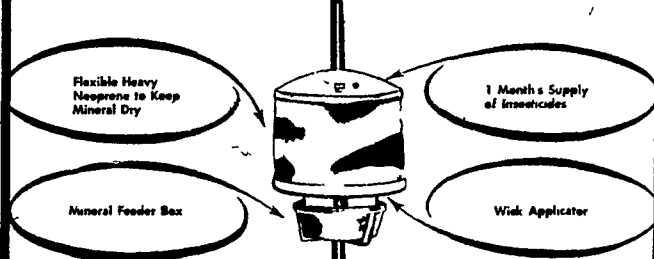
"I want to stress no one will lose his or her job as a result of this review," the secretary said. He said unnecessary positions would be abolished "as they become vacant."

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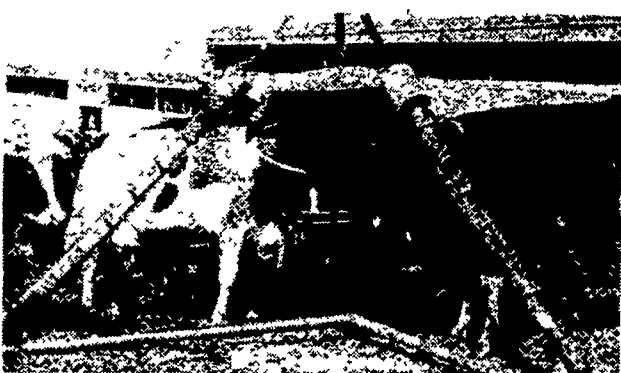


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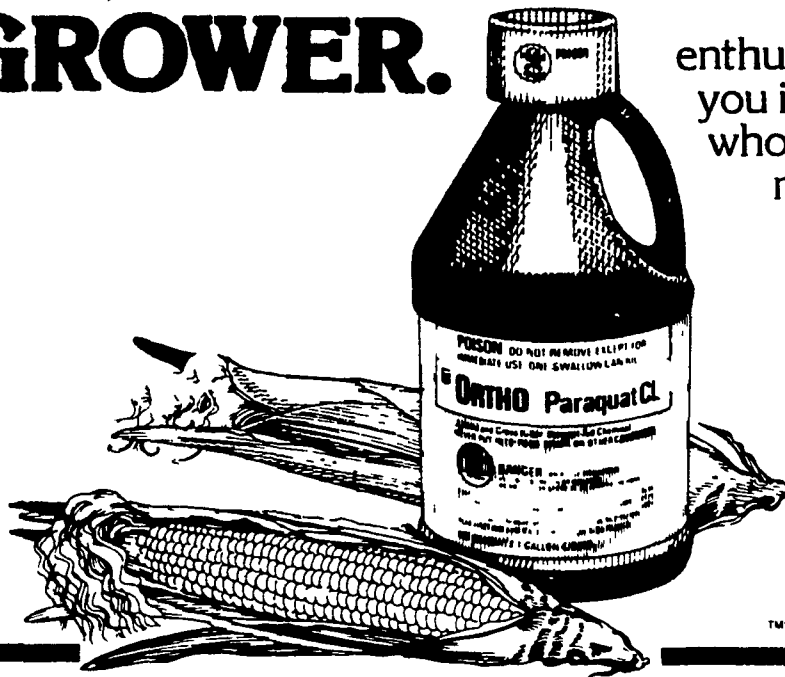
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