

Delaware's small grain crop poor

NEWARK, Del. - Winter damage to Delaware's small grain crops has turned out to be much worse than first estimates indicated. According to University of Delaware Extension agronomic crops specialist Frank J. Webb, as of the end of March close to 90 per cent of the state's barley and 20 per cent of the wheat had been lost.

Delaware's older farmers say they cannot recall a Winter kill like this on small grain crops. The problem is so unique that many growers have no idea how to evaluate the damage or what action to take to minimize their losses. (For every acre of wheat or barley destroyed, farmers stand to lose about \$30, not counting labor costs.)

One big problem is the way damage is distributed in fields. If it were just limited to some of the plants in a row, with an overall stand of grain remaining, chances are recovery would come just from fertilizing the wheat or barley and letting these grasses send out grain-producing tillers. But in many cases damage consists of large dead areas in a field - some on low ground where water has lain, some on wind-scoured high ground.

The grain that is suffering this Spring was planted at the proper time last Fall, Webb emphasizes. Most growers do not have themselves, but the weather, to blame for their losses. The normal planting date for barley for most of Kent and Sussex counties is the first two weeks of October; wheat is usually planted from October 20 up to the end of the month.

Normally that is ample time to allow grain to become established before cold weather sets in. Last Winter, however, the first killing frost occurred October 19. From that date on, the weather never warmed up. Some seed didn't even sprout until this Spring.

Given the bitter cold, the barley crop didn't have a chance, says Webb. Present varieties used in this state just weren't hardy enough to withstand the stress of the extremely low temperatures. The problem was compounded by below normal rainfall and wind-driven sand. Much of the wheat would have survived the low temperatures, had it not been for these additional stresses. Some fields that looked fairly decent in late Winter have since succumbed to the blowing sand.

Apples down

HARRISBURG, Pa. - Pennsylvania apples in cold storage on March 31 totaled 25,986,000 pounds, down 17,908,000 pounds or 41 per cent from the same period last year, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service. Indicated disappearance

during March was 22,364,000 pounds, the equivalent of 532,476 boxes of 42 pounds each.

The 25,986,000 pounds of apples in storage converts to 618,714 42-pound boxes. Of this quantity, approximately 73 per cent is indicated for processing at this time.



County 4-H members met with area legislators and other government officials during State 4-H Capital Days activities in Harrisburg, April 18-19. Those participating in the citizenship program from the Chester County 4-H Program were: Roberta Ekdahl, of West Chester (extreme left); and Stacy Seybold of Linfield, (third from left).

They joined with 4-H members from all Pennsylvania counties to take part in events designed to help them become more responsible adults. Sharing ideas with the two girls are Senator Richard A. Snyder, 13th District and Valerie Peoples, Chester County home economist.

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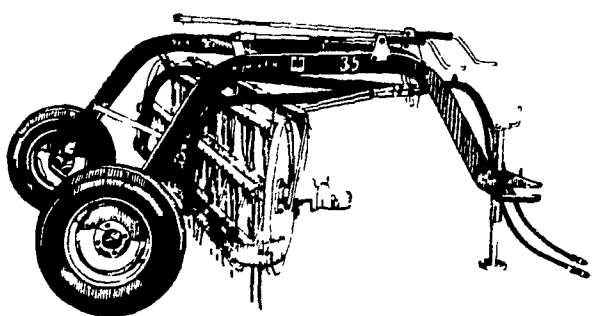
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