

# Relief services will accept help from Pa.

By JOANNE SPAHR  
LITITZ - Supplies of hay and straw are scarce nearly everywhere in Lancaster farming's coverage area this year with prices soaring higher than ever before. But, further south, in

Maryland and Virginia, drought conditions have left the farmer in even worse straits than his Pennsylvania neighbors. "We had very spotty drought here in Maryland," stated Tony Evans, in-

formation officer for the Maryland Department of Agriculture. "It was really hard on our hay crops. In some cases farmers only got two cuttings instead of four."

Virginia, as well, had its share of drought.

To aid the victims of the water shortage, several relief programs have sprung up both within the stricken states and in Pennsylvania, as well.

One program developed in the Commonwealth to come to the rescue of Virginia farmers is known as "Feed for Drought Relief," and is run by the Mennonite Disaster Service. Although those involved expect to be trucking hay down to the Shenandoah Valley after the New Year, at present the main grain being transported is corn.

"Farmers in Virginia did have rain in the Fall of the year, so they do have pastureland," explained one spokesman for MDS, "Therefore, they don't need hay as badly as they need corn right now."

Under the MDS program, anyone who is willing to help donate either corn or money to the project. The money goes into a fund which will later be used to buy grain or pay for shipping costs, and the grain, itself, gets shipped to Virginia where it is parceled out to needy farmers.

The responsibility of dividing up the corn goes to an MDS volunteer in

Virginia who uses the banks as one reference to help him in his decision.

And, while this service is rendered through the Mennonite group, those receiving the grain can be of any religious affiliation, as can the donors.

Even though the program is centered on donations, those receiving the feed are responsible for paying the freight charges. This fee has been established at \$20 per ton.

Many times, however, according to a spokesman for MDS, truckers offer to haul the grain for free, and in this case, the \$20 in freight costs go back to the MDS fund. This money is then accumulated for use in buying feed in the future, or paying freight and any unused money is sent to the MDS general fund where it will be employed in the next disaster program.

"We lost track about three weeks ago," said one spokesman, "but, at that time our donations had exceeded 1000 tons of corn." Taking a guess as to the tonnage at the present time, he estimated that 1200 tons had been delivered to date.

"The wet weather has slowed us down considerably," the spokesman said.

**Maryland Hay Lift**  
Maryland also has a type of relief system in which Pennsylvanians can get involved. Known as "Operation Maryland Haylift", this program is

established on an entirely different principal.

Developed by the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Division of Marketing, the Maryland Haylift consists of a listing of those farmers who have hay and straw for sale.

"We only act as a vehicle to connect the supplier with the buyer," explained Department of Agriculture information officer Evans. "The negotiations on price are between the two parties."

One Haylift directory has been so successful that the Department of Agriculture

is currently compiling a second one.

Anyone interested in having his name placed on the list should send his name, address, description of supply (tonnage or number of bales, and type of hay or straw), and telephone number to Bradley H. Powers, Division of Marketing, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Parole Plaza Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland, 21401. Phone: 301-269-2181.

And, those considering a donation of corn or funds to Feed for Drought Relief are asked to contact the MDS contact man in their area.



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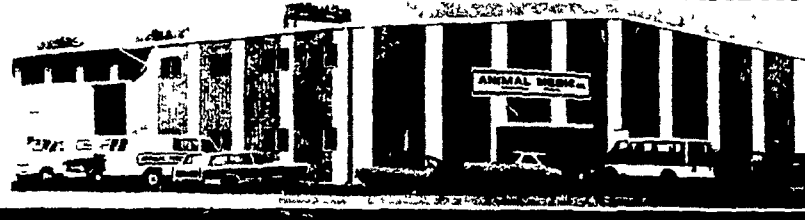
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