New crop insurance

(Continued from Page 1)

several federal programs but others not eligible for any.

"The program we are proposing would consolidate many of these programs, increase protection available to farmers, give them a choice of protection levels and make that protection affordable for most producers.

"The new program will cover the major costs of production at a reasonable premium. It is designed to provide dependable, year-after-year coverage, with continued eligibility for farmers.

"If the plan receives speedy consideration in the Congress, the first crop that could be covered would be 1980 Winter crops planted in the Fall of 1979."

Each farmer who participates in the voluntary program would pay a premium based on the level of protection he chooses and the risk involved in his farming operation. Cost of the insurance would be shared between the farmer and the government.

Under the program, each producer could choose from three levels of insurance coverage – 50, 70 and 90 per cent of his normal crop production. The farmer would pay about half the actual cost of insurance for the minimum 50 per cent protection. If he chooses 70 per cent protection, he would pay for most of the cost of the additional 20 per cent of protection. The farmer would pay all the cost for the final 20 per cent of protection at the 90-per cent level. These three levels might vary for different crops.

Secretary Bergland said that by using federal funds mainly to share premium costs for the first level of protection, with producers paying most of the premiums for higher levels of protection, a level of protection covering cost of production would be affordable to most producers.

The consolidated program is intended to replace the limited protection now offered by Federal Crop Insurance, low-yield disaster payments from Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and emergency loans from USDA's Farmers Home Administration and the Small Business Administration. Costs to the government would be less than costs of the four present programs, and more protection would be available to more farmers under the proposed plan.

The program would be marketed through private insurance agents, and county ASCS offices.

The program would be funded through USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

The new insurance program would not eliminate all disaster programs, Secretary Bergland said. Those which cover land and building damage, flood damage to farms and communities, and small business losses would remain.

"The 1977 farm bill provides protection against economic disaster through loan and target price provisions," the secretary said. "The proposed insurance program complements that action by providing adequate protection for the farmer who has a bad crop or no crop at all.

"This administration promised during consideration of the farm bill last year that we would propose revisions in the disaster protection programs for farmers, and we think this plan makes the necessary revisions by offering increased protection.

"We consider this a part of our comprehensive food and agriculture policy."

The 18 crops covered in the initial phase of the program are wheat, cotton, corn, barley, grain sorghum, rice, sugar cane, sunflowers, citrus, dry beans, soybeans, oats, flax, peanuts, tobacco, raisins, sugar beets and rye.

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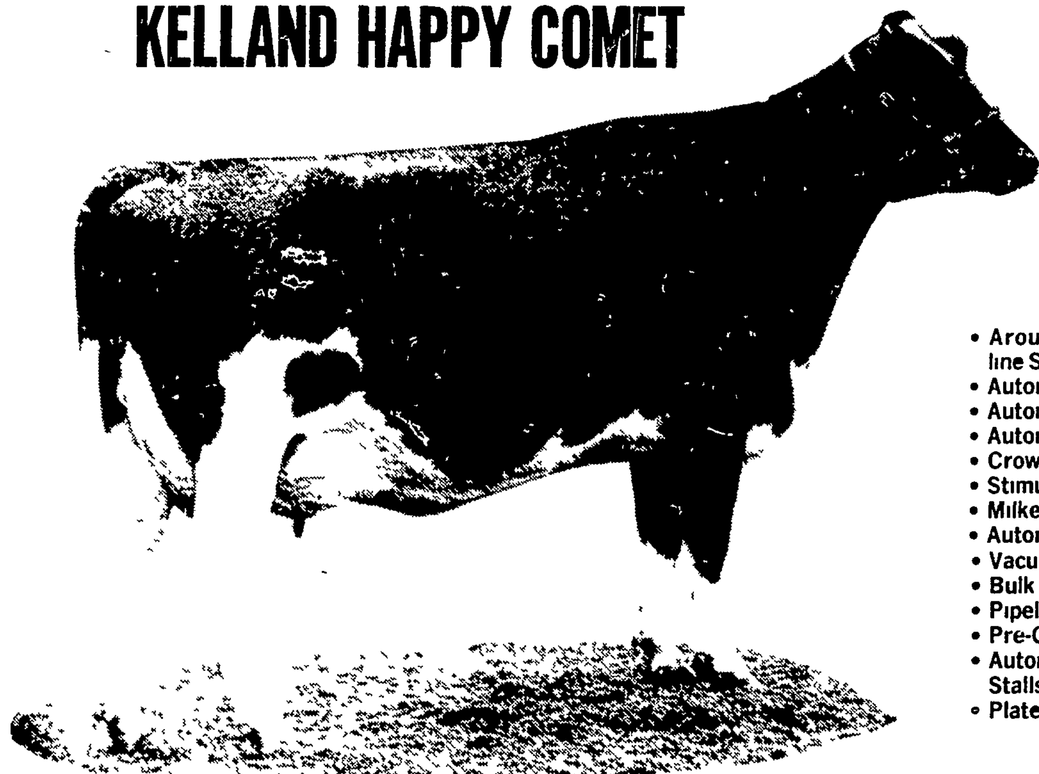

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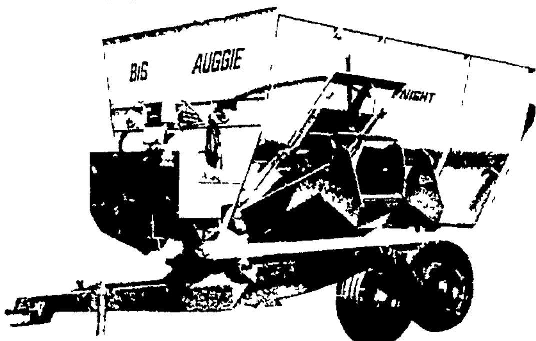

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African swine fever discovery triggers import restrictions

WASHINGTON, D.C. – An outbreak of African swine fever on the Italian island of Sardinia has caused the U.S. Department of Agriculture to impose tighter restrictions on imports of pork products from Italy.

Other countires restricted by USDA because of African swine fever are France, Spain, Portugal, Cuba and all nations in Africa.

Restrictions on the shipment of swine, pork and pork products to the United States are necessary to prevent spread of the disease to this country, where it could have a disastrous effect on the U.S. swine industry.

African swine fever is a highly contagious virus disease affecting swine only. It's symptoms include high fever, red blotches on the skin, internal bleeding, collapse of the animal and nearly 100 per cent mortality.

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