

Proposed national climate plan seen as help to farmers

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Nation's first national climate plan, being drafted by the Government, is aimed at helping farmers and other Americans better anticipate the extent and impacts of climate variations, and use the knowledge for their benefit.

Edward S. Epstein, director of the National Climate Program, office of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Monday briefed members of a blue-ribbon advisory committee on the plan, which is still in its review stages. Representatives of other federal agencies involved in the program also discussed how their agencies will handle specific aspects of the plan.

"Advanced knowledge of rain patterns could have reduced economic hardship to farmers and disruptions in the world food supply," the draft plan points out.

"Climate information would allow shifting to new crops and storage and avoidance of some of the losses. Similarly, knowledge about temperature changes could save millions of dollars and hours of personal inconvenience."

A major goal of the plan is to provide public and institutional users with increased and more varied

climate information. This will include both improved predictions of what the climate will be, and greater distribution of these predictions and other climate data to such groups as state climate offices, federal agencies, and independent climate experts. NOAA will be the lead agency in such efforts.

The Department of Energy will direct a major program to find out how the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide — caused by burning fossil fuels — is affecting climate, and how to lessen adverse impacts. Policy options available for future planning will be evaluated during the five-year period of the draft plan.

The USDA and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service will continue their major study of the effect of weather extremes and climate fluctuations on the world's food supply. Additional research is being proposed into the biological response of livestock and fish to climate fluctuations.

USDA, as the lead agency, will determine requirements for climate information and prepare all management and technical plans.

Two major research efforts also will be undertaken to increase understanding of the effects of climate on our physical environment.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration will lead an effort to clarify the processes by which radiant energy from the sun is gained and lost by the earth's atmosphere system. Earth Radiation Budget Experiment Satellite is scheduled to be launched in Fiscal Year 1983.

In the second research area, the National Science Foundation will coordinate a major effort to increase understanding of the ocean's role in climate. Researchers will seek to find out how much heat is stored and transported by the oceans.

Advances in large-scale measurements of ocean currents and temperatures are planned, possibly leading to a series of major international experiments in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

The major strategy of the plan, Epstein noted in his presentation, is to emphasize early production of useful information, while simultaneously expanding our understanding of climate.

The fiscal 1981 budget request for all climate programs totals \$135.6 million, and is forecast to level off in 1984 at \$115.6 million.

The draft plan, the five-year program that it presents, and the advisory

committee, were created under the National Climate Program Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-367). The committee will review the plan and recommend changes to the Secretary of Commerce and Congress



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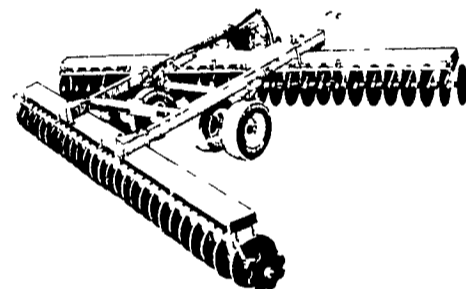
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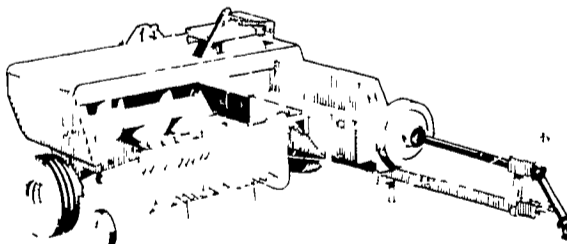
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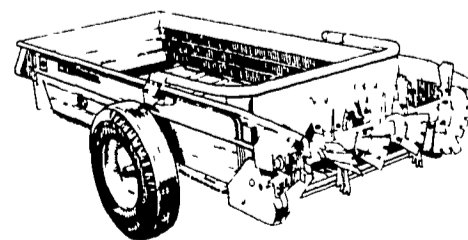
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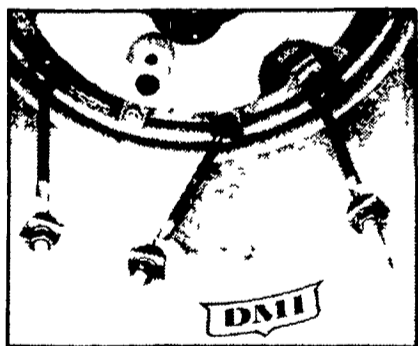
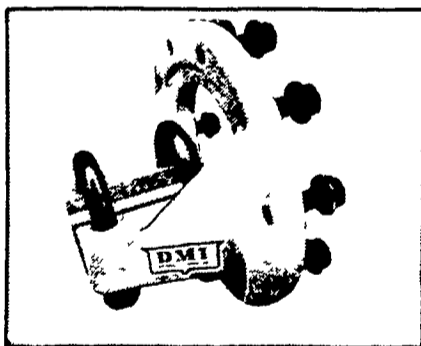
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