

Wasp airlift saves Maryland grain

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HAGERSTOWN, Md. — An airlift of parasitic wasps was conducted Thursday in Maryland, in a continuing effort to help the state's small grain farmers rid their fields of the highly destructive cereal leaf beetle.

For the third year, entomologists of the Maryland department of Agriculture's Plant Protection Section are teaming up with their counterparts in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Maryland Extension Service to release the beneficial wasps in grain fields.

The wasps, which are not harmful to humans, lay their eggs in the immature cereal leaf beetles. The eggs hatch and destroy the beetles before they reach full development. Control of the

beetle in fields where the parasites have been released in earlier years has been good.

According to Charles Staines who is coordinating the parasite release program in Maryland this year, the wasps were reared in an insectary by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and were flown to Maryland in a USDA plane.

That plane made stops in Hagerstown, Frederick, Westminster, and the Baltimore Air Park at White Marsh.

Tins of the insects were picked up at the various airports and then rushed to about 65 different release sites in small grain fields in the following counties: Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Charles,

Frederick, Harford and Washington.

The cereal leaf beetle is a relatively new pest in the U.S. It was not discovered in the country until 1962 in

Michigan. Since then it has spread, establishing itself in Maryland by the early 1970's. Heavily infested grain fields can suffer up to a 30% loss of the crop.

Alcohol co-op forms

GRANTVILLE — On Wednesday, a new alcohol cooperative was officially formed, announced Stan Keller, of Kelmanada, Inc.

What started earlier this month at a meeting of 76 interested people at the Landis Valley Motor Inn, finally became a reality.

The new co-op's name is Penn Agrihol, according to Steering Committee Chairman Keller. Its function will be to produce alcohol for fuel.

Primarily a co-op for farmers, Keller said, it will be a market for farmers to sell or consign their grain. Keller noted farmers will be able to buy the alcohol that's produced, and can also feed the distilling by-products to livestock.

"We hope to be in production by this winter," Keller said, "but we have to see how much money can be raised."

Keller pointed out Senator George Gekas is one of the co-op's backers. He is serving as the steering committee's legal counsel.

The cooperative idea has met with "real enthusiasm", according to Keller. He

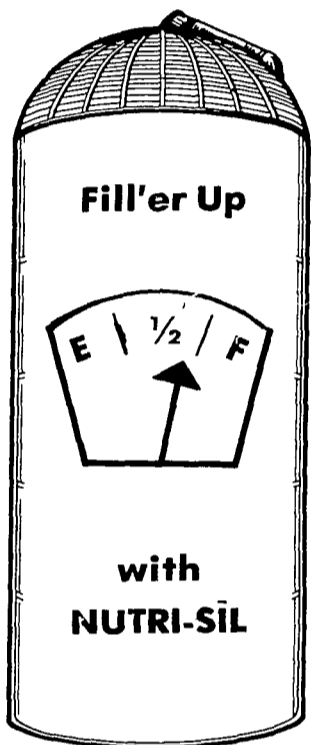
noted that the newly formed organization will be having a membership drive in the near future. "We invite any interested person, farmer or non-farmer, to join," he said.

Keller added that Penn Agrihol will be based out of Kelmanada's Grantville operation. "We're already in the fertilizer business,"

Keller remarked, "and we have the contacts with farmers. It'll be cheaper because we've got the land, the transportation and the tanks."

The only major item the new co-op needs that Kelmanada doesn't have on hand is the distilling equipment for alcohol production. "We plan to buy the essentials from a producer," Keller said, "and make our own adjustments."

For more information on the co-op, contact any one of the following steering committee people: Stan Keller, chairman 717/469-2864; James Kessler, vice-chairman, Grantville; or Marion Brubaker, secretary, 717/653-5142.



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