

Ag Department to run toll-free produce hotline

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania's farmers can now take advantage of a toll-free telephone service which will provide information on current retail price ranges for fresh produce, according to State Agriculture Secretary Penrose

Hallowell. Hallowell said the new telephone service (1/800-932-0904) began Monday, and will remain in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through the fall growing season. The Produce Marketers

Hotline is part of the Agriculture Department's effort to improve farm marketing in the state. Hallowell said, "We hope that farmers involved in direct marketing will take advantage of this information to assist them in

determining their pricing. Greater stability in pricing and supplies should enhance the orderly marketing of fresh farm produce." The toll-free service is a pilot project, co-funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture with \$5346 in matching funds from the Agriculture Marketing Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Taped information on supplies, availability and price ranges for fresh produce will be updated each Monday afternoon and Thursday morning. Initially, the information will include such early crops as strawberries, sugar peas, snap beans, leaf lettuce, onions, spinach and cabbage. Through the summer and fall other fresh crops such as sweet corn, peaches, tomatoes, peppers, melons, fruits and berries, potatoes and squash will be detailed as they become available for fresh market, according to John W. Scott, Chief of the Department's Marketing Services Division. Scott said the entire fresh produce industry can be the beneficiary of this pilot

project. He noted that if successful, it could become a permanent service of the Bureau of Markets for direct farm marketers at a minimal cost to the Commonwealth. More information on the

toll-free Produce Marketers Hotline can be obtained by writing the Division of Marketing Services, Bureau of Markets, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110, or by calling 717-787-4210.

Named senior extension agent

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN — Ruth M. Hand, Schuylkill County Extension agent — home economics on Penn State's Extension Service staff, has been promoted to the rank of senior Extension agent, effective July 1.

Thomas B. King, who announced the promotion, said that the internal rank system provides recognition for extension staff members who are conducting outstanding educational programs. Senior Extension agent, King points out, is the highest rank attainable in county Extension work.

A native of Tremont, Pennsylvania, Mrs. Hand received a bachelor of science degree from Man-

field State College. Before joining the Extension Service in 1963, she taught home economics at Blue Mountain High School, Cressona, Tremont, Pine Grove and Porter Township schools.

In Schuylkill County, Mrs. Hand has established several unique programs stressing self-improvement. She often presents programs for the working woman on topics ranging from money management to cleaning furniture, at manufacturing plants to workers during breaks and lunch hours.

Homemakers and professionals alike have taken her in-depth clothing program.

She has also developed a special course "For Women Over Forty—the Look You Like."

In 1978, Mrs. Hand received a Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of Extension Home Economists.

She is a member of the American Home Economics Association and is past President of the Pennsylvania Home Economics Association. She is also a member of both the National and Pennsylvania Association of Extension Home Economists; Epsilon Sigma Phi, Extension honorary; Federation of Women's Clubs, Order of Eastern Star and Pottsville Garden Society.

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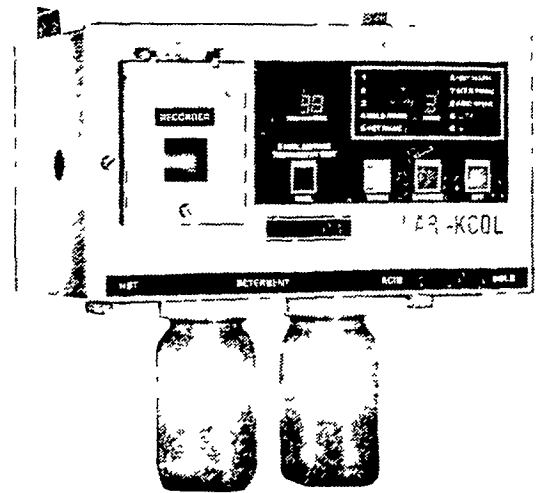
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