

# Secretary 'disappointed' with mushroom import decision

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell Wednesday expressed "disappointment" with President Carter's recent decision on mushroom imports.

He said the decision would

give little help to the industry in areas where help is needed most. Pennsylvania leads the nation in mushroom production and processing of mushroom products.

The U.S. International Trade Commission

recommended in August that a three-year program of quantitative restrictions on mushroom imports be put in effect, to allow the national mushroom industry time to recover from the damage inflicted by imported processed mushrooms.

A minority report, endorsed by Hallowell, called for a five-year program of import quotas.

On Friday, the President announced his decision, which includes increases in tariff duties on imported processed mushrooms, and the creation of an inter-agency task force to work with the American Mushroom Institute, but no import quotas.

Hallowell said, "I am very disappointed with the scope and nature of the President's actions. After a very lengthy process of investigation and public hearings, the International Trade Commission recommended two possible alternatives to

provide assistance to this industry, which has been hurt by imports in the past ten years.

"The President, unfortunately for the Pennsylvania mushroom industry, has ignored the carefully considered recommendations of his own commission, and has gone against the purpose of the hearing process," he said.

Hallowell said an increase in tariff levels will do little to solve the problems faced by Pennsylvania growers and processors.

"Imported processed mushrooms have been arriving in the United States, and severely undercutting prices in the open marketplace," he said.

"This increase in tariff levels will not provide any assistance to the growers of mushrooms, who still must sell their products to processors at prices set by their buyers. And the net effect to processors will be a

decline in their profit margin with similar impact on the retailers of processed mushroom products."

Hallowell said the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture would continue

to work with the Pennsylvania mushroom growers and processors to seek "effective, efficient long range solutions to the problems which have disrupted the industry."

## Mushrooms

(Continued from Page A1) more and unload them over here?" asked a spokesman for PFA.

Concluded PFA: It's still unfair competition.

The Grange, on the other hand, maintains the decision for a tariff "is not half bad."

The Grange said the tariffs pretty much equalize the gap between the costs of production of foreign and domestic mushrooms.

The problem the Grangers see is the tariff, lasting only three years, is a temporary solution. They said they will continue to work for a permanent solution.

For mushroom growers there is consolation that a

President finally took action, any action, to provide some form of relief. Three times in the past decade a president has declined to take any action at all on mushroom imports.

In all three cases the International Trade Commission had recommended presidential action.

Was the move by Carter politically motivated?

"I don't think so," said one observer adding, "there just aren't that many American mushroom growers around any more."

But then, that was exactly the problem a quota or tariff on mushrooms was meant to handle.

## Food processors react to mushroom tariff

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Food Processors Association, a trade association, representing the mushroom, fruit and vegetable processors in Pennsylvania is reacting rather cautiously to the President's action on mushrooms.

Rocco Pugliese, executive director of the Pennsylvania Food Processors Association, said he feels that the three-year tariff increase, as determined by President Carter, will not effectively correct the import problem as would a tariff quota, which was recommended by the International Trade Commission.

The ITC majority and minority report recommended a three and five year import quota respectively.

Pugliese did say, "Even though Carter's action was not consistent with the ITC recommendation, we will

take a wait-and-see approach to determine whether the tariff can successfully stem the flow of foreign mushroom imports into this country and in turn restore the mushroom industry as a viable component of the State's economic community.

"We just hope the President is correct in his assertion that the tariff will deal with the problem," he said.



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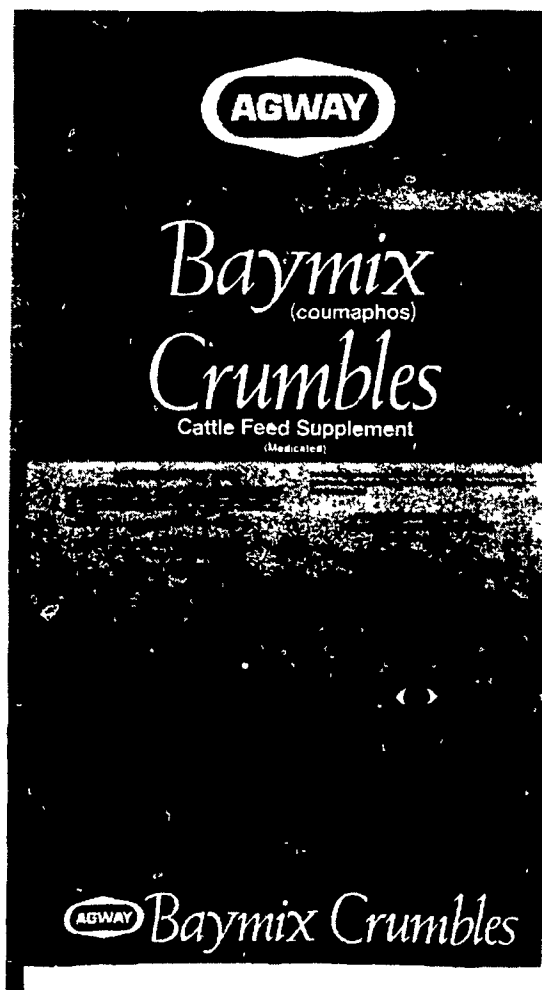
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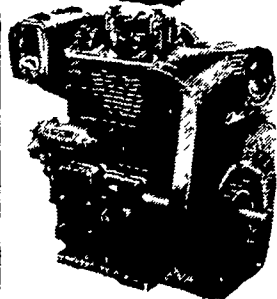


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