

Southcentral area suffering most

Wintertime drought setting dry records

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — The mid-Atlantic area didn't really set any all-time high temperatures during last summer's hot weather. But it is currently in the midst of shattering records throughout the state in the wintertime drought category.

So says W. Joseph Moyer, state climatologist and agronomy department faculty member at the University of Maryland in College Park.

Moyer's records show that precipitation for December and January at 12 reporting stations averaged less than 25 percent of normal. Only Cumberland and Oakland, in Maryland's two westernmost counties, were above this figure.

Those two locations had precipitation figures at 29 and 28 percent of normal, respectively, thanks to heavy snowfalls beginning on December 19. Surprisingly, the snow cover still persists in Garrett county, although the ice in Deep Creek

Lake was beginning to breakup during the mild weather of late January.

Rain this week helped somewhat, but there still is a long way to go.

Moyer reports the previous all-time low precipitation marks for December and January at most Maryland locations were set during the winter of 1955-56. At Oakland, the record was set in 1966-67, while at Hagerstown it was established in 1937-38.

The oldest marks were established in 1889-90 at College Park, 1893-94 at Cumberland, and 1871-72 at Frederick.

All of the wintertime drought marks except the one at Cumberland have now been broken, Moyer said.

He noted the Maryland situation is part of a national dry-weather pattern that extends all the way from the Rocky Mountains in the West to the Mid-Atlantic area in the East. The Mid-Atlantic drought belt extends from southeastern

New York state, across northern New Jersey, southeastern Pennsylvania, the eastern two-thirds of Maryland, and into central Virginia.

South central Pennsylvania has been suffering even more than Maryland, Moyer said, having been declared an area of extreme drought according to the Palmer index, a measure of prolonged and abnormal moisture deficiency used by the National Weather Service.

The same index classifies most of Maryland east of Cumberland as a severe drought area—slightly less serious than the Pennsylvania situation.

This winter's lack of precipitation in Maryland means that there is no recharging of ground water supplies, already in short supply due to drought conditions which have persisted over most of the state since last summer. Again, only extreme western Maryland escaped that situation.

Total precipitation at Oakland during 1980 was more than 2.5 inches above normal, while precipitation over the rest of the state was mostly 2.5 to 4 inches below normal. Upper Marlboro (Prince Georges county) and the nearby National Airport at Washington, D.C., had precipitation totals that were more than 9.5 inches below normal.

Does all of this infer a summertime drought even worse than the one last year?

That's possible, Moyer agrees. On the other hand, look at what happened in the summer of 1956 after an extremely dry winter which set most of the previous drought records.

Moyer's archives show that 1956 rainfall was plentiful in June and extremely heavy in July. This brought total precipitation for the year up to normal for most of the state and above normal both on the Eastern Shore and in extreme western Maryland.

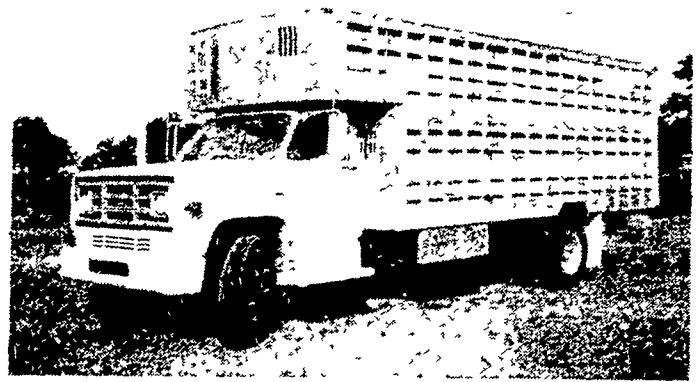
Statistics from the Maryland Crop Reporting Service show that

both corn and soybeans set what were then new yield records for the state in 1956. The average yield for soybeans that year was 25 bushels per acre, compared with 21 bushels per acre in 1955. Meanwhile, the state's average corn yield ballooned from 40.5 bushels per acre in 1955 to 60 bushels per acre in 1956.



**READ
LANCASTER
FARMING
FOR COMPLETE
AND
UP-TO-DATE
MARKET
REPORTS**

M.H. EBY, INC. Manufacturer of All Aluminum Truck Bodies Livestock, Grain & Bulk Feed



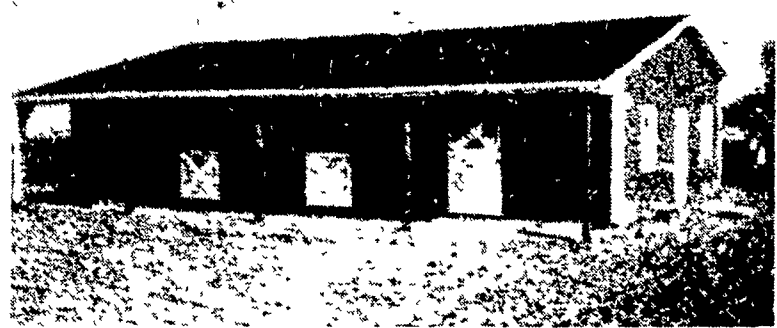
Aluminum Livestock Body

Distributor of **TIMPT** Refrigerated Trailers
Sales & Service
Blue Ball, Pa. 717-354-4971

COMPLETE BUILDING SYSTEMS FOR HORSE BARNS - ALL SIZES



★ RIDING ARENAS ★ STALL BARNs



Backyard Horse Barn

**We Have A Skilled Crew
Available For Erection if Desired**

**CALL FOR ESTIMATES ON OUR LOW PRICED,
HIGH QUALITY BUILDINGS**



Multiple Stabling for Riding Clubs, etc.

Call or Write To Us

WICKES LUMBER

Rt. 272 & Garden Spot Road
Ephrata, PA 17522

717-738-2401
717-394-9325

Or

MERVIN MILLER — 717-626-5204

• DAIRY • BEEF • POULTRY • SWINE
• HORSE BARNs • ALL PURPOSE BUILDINGS