

Hallowell testifies on USDA budget

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell Wednesday told the House Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies that significant progress is needed in updating and streamlining our agriculture production and marketing methods and technologies during the 1980's.

Hallowell was in Washington testifying on behalf of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture in relation to the proposed 1981-82 U.S. Department of Agriculture budget.

Hallowell said, "Rampant inflation, expansion of export trade and serious transportation and energy problems have all put tremendous strains on our traditional marketing system in recent years. Farm prosperity increasingly depends on a food marketing system that is modern, efficient and capable of adapting to rapidly changing circumstances."

Hallowell said that the Federal State Marketing Improvement Program has been helpful in accomplishing this goal, sponsoring innovative test projects which pioneer new approaches to food marketing.

"These projects are coordinated with the Agricultural Marketing Services' Marketing Research and Development Program for maximum effectiveness," he said. During the 1980-82 fiscal year, 38 project applications from 18 states were received by USDA, ranging from improving the competitiveness of soybean exports to identifying unnecessary legal and regulatory impediments to the marketing of produce on small farms.

Pennsylvania's Farmer to

Consumer Marketing Services, Inc. is one example of a pilot project being financed by FSMIP. The program is aimed at improving the marketing position of small farmers by giving them the opportunity to sell products from a warehouse to institutions, small stores and wholesale outlets.

Hallowell said, "Most states do not have the resources to undertake pilot marketing projects without the financial incentives provided via FSMIP. NASDA requested funding for the program at the 1980-81 levels of \$1.6 million."

Hallowell noted that NASDA strongly endorsed the proposed increase in the Foreign Agriculture Service's market development program. "Agricultural trade is a powerful weapon against inflation," he said.

Last year, agricultural exports provided the nation with a record favorable trade balance of \$23 billion. "This helped offset our purchases of foreign oil, automobiles and other imported non-farm products, and cut the nation's overall trade deficit in half."

He said that a prime goal of future cooperation between the Foreign Agriculture Service and the states would be to open export opportunities for producers and processors who have not been involved in export markets.

Hallowell also testified on the importance of inspection programs to the states, to control meat and poultry inspections, and animal and plant health. "NASDA strongly supports the need for an increase in the APHIS Contingency Fund to meet emergency animal and plant disease, and pest control needs," he said.

"Outbreaks of the past two years have shown that the current funding levels are inadequate. Unpredictable emergency conditions can result in significant damage to our agricultural resources, and contingency funding is often our only means for taking immediate action when such outbreaks occur."

He pointed to the importance of the brucellosis eradication program as another priority item and said,

"The successful eradication of brucellosis nationwide can be achieved through the improved

procedures that include calfhood vaccination programs, testing of infected and exposed herds, use of quarantines and the paying of indemnities to cattle owners for animals destroyed.

"We have reached a critical point in the brucellosis program when increased expenditures are needed now if we hope to hold the ground we have won at great cost in past years," he said.

Hallowell said NASDA recognized the overriding need for

fiscal restraint and stands prepared to "shoulder our fair share of the burden imposed by cutbacks."

But in discussing the meat and poultry inspection and FDA portions of the budget, he cautioned, "Cooperative programs get more results for the money, make possible better utilization of personnel and facilities, and give state agencies the flexibility to respond to local needs and policies."



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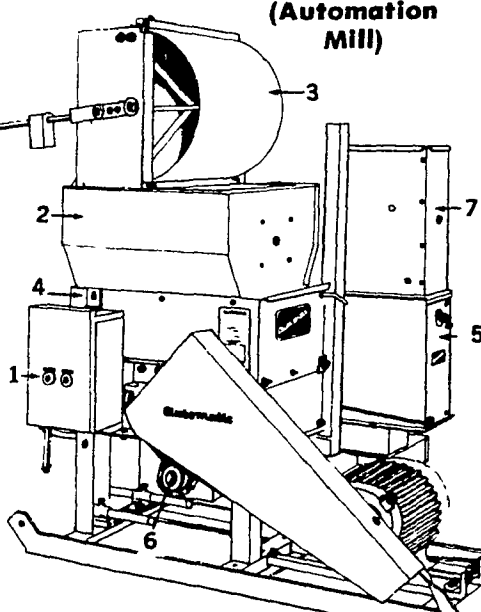
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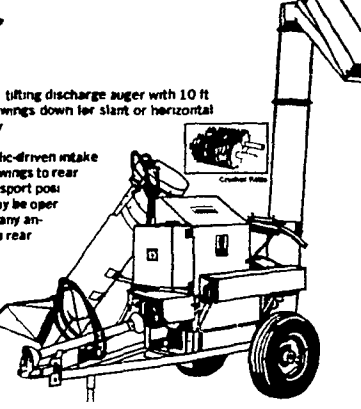


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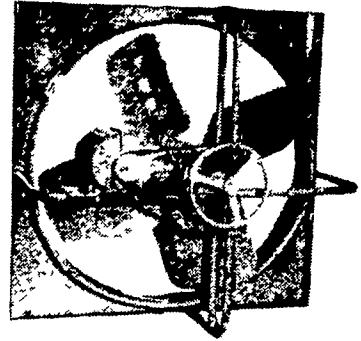
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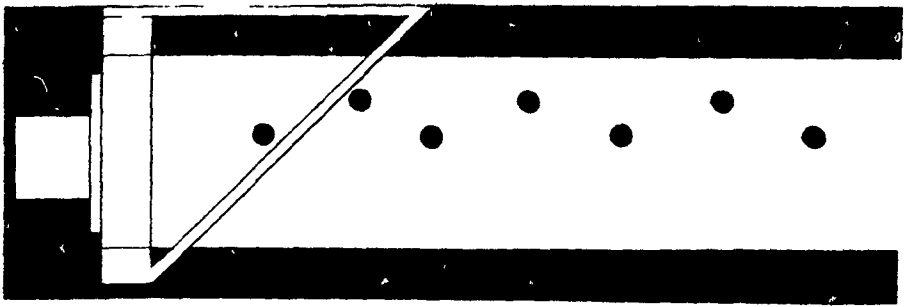
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