

State deploys staff to guard against Medfly infiltration

HARRISBURG — Representatives from all phases of the Pennsylvania fruit and produce industry met here Tuesday to discuss ways to assure the Mediterranean fruit fly does not enter the Commonwealth from California.

Meeting with State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell were State Representative John Hope Anderson of York County,

representatives of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Association, area fruit growers, fruit and produce distributors and officials from the State Agriculture Department's Bureau of Plant Industry and Markets.

Hallowell said, "As a first step to keep the medfly out of Pennsylvania, inspectors have been sent to major food distribution

centers in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and other areas in the state

"By increasing inspections of rail and truck shipments of California fruit and produce at those terminals, we will be able to detect any presence of the pest when the shipments first arrive in the state," he added

The secretary indicated state

inspectors will be checking other shipments of fruit and produce received directly at large supermarket warehouses throughout the state to assure the pest is not present.

He added the department will be in constant touch with USDA and surrounding state officials to coordinate efforts in controlling the fruit fly.

"Most produce received in Pennsylvania from California does not normally come from the infested area," Hallowell said. "The increased inspections are precautionary and part of the department's continuing effort to provide consumers in the state with only the finest quality agricultural products."

Should California be completely quarantined, he added, the immediate impact on Pennsylvania consumers would be minimal, due to the enormous quantity of produce already in the distribution system.

Hallowell said, "If a prolonged quarantine takes place, we would find shortages of some California specialty crops, but our own Pennsylvania produce, which is coming into season, and produce from other states should fill the market needs."

Pennsylvania grown fruit and produce coming into season within the next few weeks include apples, peaches, nectarines and early tomatoes.

"I don't foresee empty shelves at the supermarket, but prices could be expected to rise," he said.

SCS provides emergency stream repair

HARRISBURG — Flood damage streams in two areas of Pennsylvania are being restored by a federal conservation agency following early summer storms.

Graham T. Munkittrick, state conservationist, reported that the USDA, Soil Conservation Service, in cooperation with county conservation districts, will spend over \$2 million under Section 216 of the 1950 Federal Flood Control Act to

restore ravaged streams that posed an immediate threat to life and property.

According to Munkittrick, over \$1.5 million will be used in the six-county area of Venango, Crawford, Mercer, Jefferson, Forest, and Clarion. Federal funds are permitting the removal of 44,000 tons of debris in streams and floodplains. About 21,000 tons of rock riprap and 30 acres of seeding will

stabilize eroding streambanks damaged in a June storm.

Two weeks later, a sudden storm hit Clinton County. As a result, about \$0.5 million will be spent by SCS to remove 7,600 tons of debris, place 8,600 tons of rock riprap, and seed 20 acres to stabilize streambanks.

"Work on the streams in northwest Pennsylvania will be completed by next week July 15, and the Clinton County jobs will be finished by August 1," added Munkittrick.

Using emergency procedures, SCS funds hire private contractors

to do the repair work under SCS technical supervision. Work is planned by SCS engineering teams who also evaluate the need for restoration.

Munkittrick added all possible environmental precautions are taken. The goal is to restore the stream to pre-flood conditions only. Size and capacity of the stream may not be changed under present regulations.

The program is designed to help the local residents return to normal pre-flood conditions as quickly as possible, concluded Munkittrick.

Farm Bureau says 'scrap' farm bill proposals

WASHINGTON, D.C. — American Farm Bureau President Robert Delano says Congress should scrap both pending versions of a farm bill and extend current legislation unless it can come up with an improved market oriented farm program.

Delano claims both Senate and House farm bills in their present form "are the worst since the introduction of the Brannan Plan in 1949." (Critics of the "Brannan Plan" said it involved massive government control and strict regimentation of agriculture.)

In an editorial published today in Farm Bureau News, official AFBF publication, Delano says the 1981 farm bills are ill-constructed, poorly balanced and, if passed in present form, will do serious damage to the concept of a market oriented farm policy.

"It is an incongruous set of circumstances that finds a

Washington establishment obsessed with economic recovery and deregulation yet willing to wreak havoc on the farm economy by putting the government back into the farming business in the biggest way since the 1950s," Delano says.

He warns that target price and loan rate provisions currently under consideration by the lawmakers must be changed to avoid leading major commodities into an excessive surplus situation complete with government supply management, takeover of commodity marketing and all that goes with it.

"It Congress cannot come to its senses and produce farm program legislation that is an improvement over the current law, the Food and Drug Agriculture Act of 1977—with some minor modifications—should be extended until a better proposal can be developed," Delano concludes.

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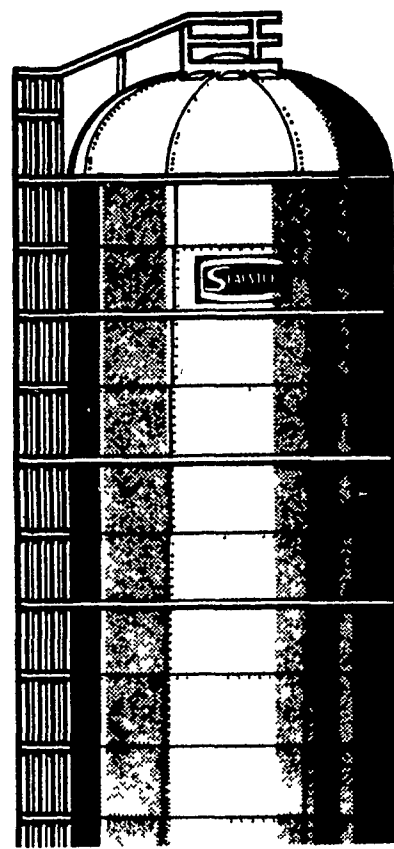
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