

Letters To The Editor

Stewart-suspicion spurs Md. grain laws

Two bills of major importance to Maryland's grain industry were enacted by the Maryland General Assembly earlier this year with the responsibility of administering them given to the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

One measure, (H.B. 1319) requires MDA to set up a system of licensing grain buyers throughout the state. The companion bill, (H.B. 1037) calls for creation of a "Grain Indemnity Fund" to insure against cases where farmers deliver grain to a buyer, but for some reason or another, don't get paid for it.

The measures are going to be very complicated programs to get running properly at the start and, therefore, my Department is cautiously devising the needed regulations to implement them.

We don't intend to rush out and set up a hasty, crash-type program which might result in confusion, mis-application, and a bureaucratic nightmare. Farmers don't need MDA to saddle them with another bind of red tape.. no matter how good the stated purpose.

Therefore, I have given the responsibility of administering the program and devising the crucial implementing regulations to Thomas O. Meredith, Jr., Chief of MDA's Grading Services and Egg Inspection Section. Tom has a strong, no-nonsense agricultural background, and his approach to problems is one of simplicity, practicality and directness.

In brief, here's what the bills call for:

Buying licensing — any person or company, who purchases 25,000 bushels of grain a year in Maryland will be required to secure a buyer's license from MDA at a \$200 yearly fee. A license will be required to carry insurance to cover the value of the grain he buys. The insurance will cover loss from fire, lightning, storm, etc. The licensed buyer will also be required to show that he, or his grain buying business, has a net worth of at least \$100,000 or that he has posted a \$100,000 surety bond.

Grain Indemnity Fund — a fund will be established and administered by MDA to indemnify grain producers in the event of loss of their grain after they have delivered it to buyers. As you all know, such losses happen and can be quite large. What brings them about is bankruptcy on the part of the grain buyer or, in some celebrated cases, outright fraud where the buyer gets the grain and the farmer is left holding an empty bag when it comes to getting paid.

The fund will build up to a maximum level of \$5 million via an assessment of 5 mills (one-half cent) per bushel of grain at the time the grain is delivered to the buyer. The assessment will be paid into the fund by the buyer. In the event grain is resold, no additional assessment will be made. In other words, it will be assessed only once — at the first time it is sold.

When the \$5 million fund ceiling

is reached the assessments shall stop and will not be reinstated until payments are made by the Grain Indemnity Fund to cover claims filed by grain producers.

Thus, in theory the fund could assess the first one billion bushels of Maryland grain sold, reach the \$5 million level, and exist for years without assessment as the interest earned on the \$5 million might be enough to administer the program and pay modest claims made against it.

But no one knows, for, if they did, there would be no need for the fund in the first place. However, at one-half cent per bushel assessment, it is going to take a long time to build up the fund. In 1979, our record grain production year in Maryland, about 80 million bushels of corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, rye and oats were produced. At this rate, it would take about 13 years to build up to the \$5 million fund ceiling.

Tom Meredith, Wayne Cawley, Brad Powers of MDA's Marketing Division, and many others in the Department have been talking over regulation ideas with the Maryland Agricultural Commission, the Farm Bureau, the Maryland Grain Producers Association and many others to get their input and ideas.

If you would like copies of the bills to study so that you can offer suggestions as to the regulations we should adopt to implement the programs, please contact Thomas O. Meredith, Jr., Maryland Department of Agriculture, Parole Plaza Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland 21401, 301/269-2322. He'll be happy to send you copies of the bills.

Both Tom and I will be glad to hear your ideas as to sound ways to implement the programs. It is going to affect you if you grow, sell or buy grain and we want you to help us to make the two new programs work to the benefit of all concerned.

Now, how often do the policy holders get a chance to help write the insurance policy? In a way, that's the chance you have on this one.

Wayne A. Cawley, Jr.
Md. Secretary of Agriculture

Farm Calendar

Saturday, July 25

Jefferson County Holstein Club sale, noon at Sykesville Fairgrounds.

Keystone Grange Fair, Waterworks Municipal Park, Trappe, 11 a.m. until dusk.

Traditional craftspeople of Delaware Exposition, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

National Farm Safety week, July 25-31

Dauphin Co. Farmer's Assoc. family picnic, Halifax Community park, Halifax, 7 p.m.

Sunday, July 26

Chester Co. Farmer's Assoc. pig roast and picnic, Hibernia Park, 1 p.m.

Clarion Co. Fair, New Bethlehem, until Saturday

Monday, July 27

Butler Co. Fair, Butler, until Saturday

Goshen County fair, West Chester, until Saturday.

Tuesday, July 28

National Chicken Cooking Contest, Ocean City, Md., continues until Sunday

Adams In-County Vegetable Growers Tour, 9 a.m.

Sewing Clinic, Hunterdon Co. New Jersey Extension Center, 10 a.m.-12 noon.

Mercer Co. Pomona Grange Fair, Mercer, until Saturday.

Jacktown Fair, Wind Ridge, until Saturday.

Pioneer Research Center Alfalfa tour, Guy Eshelman farm, southeast of Mountville along Dohneville Road, 10 until noon

York Co. 4-H Roller Skating Party, Roller Way West, Delco Plaza, 7-10 p.m.

Wednesday, July 29

Adams County summer dairy tour to Frederick Co. Md., bus leaves from North Gettysburg Shopping Center at 8 a.m.

Adams Fruitgrowers tour, Fremont and Kuntz orchard, Corn Valley, 6:30 p.m.

Canning Clinic, Hunterdon Co. New Jersey Extension Center, 10 a.m. until noon.

Southeast Field Day at Research Lab, Landisville, 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

University of Maryland tobacco field day, tobacco research farm - Upper Marlboro, 9:30 a.m. until noon.

Thursday, July 30

Berks Co. Holstein Club sale, Reading Fairgrounds Mall, Reading.

Lancaster Poultry Association tour to Baltimore.

PA Yorkshire Co-Op Association meeting, Lebanon, continues tomorrow.

Fayette Co. Fair, Uniontown, until August 8

1981 FFA Market Hog Show and Sale, Lancaster FFA, show 8-11 a.m., sale 1:30 p.m., Lancaster Union Stockyards.

Lancaster Co. Holstein Club field day, John Landis Farm, 1801 Colebrook Rd., East Petersburg 10:30 a.m.

Friday, July 31

Delaware Dairy Goat Assoc. show, Delaware State Fair

28th Annual Penn State Square Dance Festival, Hetzel Union Building, continues to tomorrow

Saturday, August 1

Western Pa. Holstein Show, Butler Pa. Nut Growers Picnic, Miles Nolt farm, RD #7 Manheim, open to the public, for more information phone 665-5760.

Now Is The Time

(Continued from Page A10)

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You learn something new

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know how much I enjoy your paper.

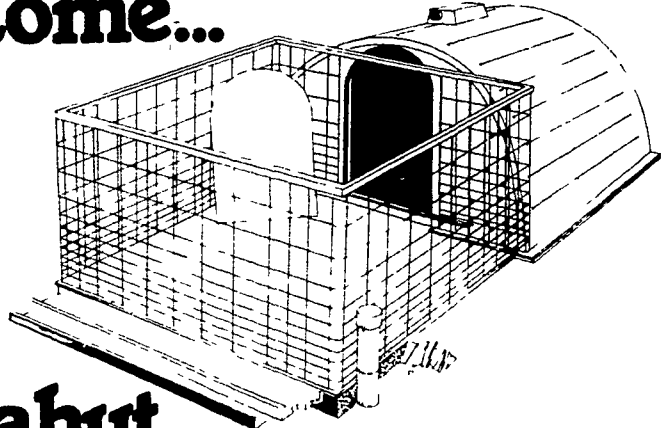
It seems like every week I learn something new or am reminded of something I had forgotten to do. Although I have never been in the area that most of your articles are written about I get the notion to

travel up that way rather often.

My wife and I live on a small farm and raise a few head of various kinds of livestock and poultry as well as do a little "horse trading" from time to time.

Ronnie E. Knight
Camden on Gauley, W.Va.

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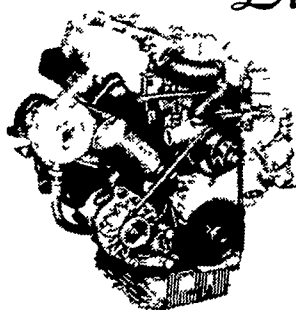
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