

Ag Dept. Regional Offices serve local needs

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's seven regional offices bring the services of the agency to within an arm's reach of farmers and consumers across the state. The offices are located in Meadville, Williamsport, Tunkhannock, Gibsonia, Altoona, Summerdale and Lansdale.

Under a regional director, each office allows the Agriculture Department to keep in close contact with the rural community, assisting farmers and others on a host of agricultural and consumer problems.

State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell said, "Governor Thornburgh has challenged us to improve the services of the Department of Agriculture for the people we represent. We hope that, like Pennsylvania Agriculture, our efforts will continue growing better."

Hallowell said each office is manned by a qualified staff in six different bureaus: Foods and Chemistry, Plant Industry, Dog Law Enforcement, Animal Industry, Standard Weights and Measures, and Rural Affairs.

Inspectors from the Bureau of Foods and Chemistry are

responsible for safeguarding public health through rigid supervision of the state's food supply. They help assure that farmers and consumers are dealt with fairly in the marketplace.

These inspectors travel throughout the state checking and sampling milk from farm to market, and inspecting food processors, manufacturers, restaurants and food markets. They also regulate food content and labeling. Samples collected by the inspectors are analyzed to insure purity.

Inspectors from the Bureau of Plant Industry are responsible for helping area farmers identify and control pests and diseases. Their work also assures consumers of high quality plants and plant materials.

Plant Industry inspectors regulate the content, labeling and sales of feed, fertilizer and seed, control use and sale of pesticides and protect nurseries and greenhouses.

Possibly the best know agency in the Department of Agriculture is the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement, which deals with a

variety of dog-related problems.

State Dog Law Enforcement Officers in each region are responsible for dog control and licensing, kennel inspections and investigation of claims by farmers for damages caused by dogs to livestock and poultry.

Technicians and a staff veterinarian from the Bureau of Animal Industry conduct the daily work necessary to keep a tight rein on such animal diseases as brucellosis and tuberculosis.

Inspecting farms and collecting samples at both auctions and meat packing plants, the bureau is able to control and eradicate diseases which might affect human health or cause economic losses to farmers.

The Bureau of Animal Industry also maintains diagnostic laboratories in Tunkhannock, Wyoming County, and Summerdale, Cumberland County. Through these laboratories, animal health can be certified and examinations can be performed to help farmers prevent the spread of diseases through their herds.

A driver who feels he has been cheated at the gas pump or a

consumer who is sure the scales at the market are inaccurate can also turn to the regional office for help. The Bureau of Standard Weights and Measures runs an inspection program in each region covering such items as produce and meat scales, grain moisture meters, gasoline pumps, weights of retail packages, bulk milk tanks and even parking meters.

Hallowell said, "The Weights and Measures inspection program assures farmers, consumers and businessmen that they are receiving a fair deal in the marketplace. Businesses and farmers could lose thousands of dollars if the scales were off by fractions of an ounce. And consumers deserve to get what they pay for."

Regional coordinators from the Bureau of Rural Affairs are responsible for providing assistance to agricultural and rural organizations in community planning and development. "They help seek out sources of grants and loans for community projects, conduct field survey work and work to improve the promotion and marketing of Pennsylvania

agricultural commodities," Hallowell said.

The addresses, telephone numbers and regional directors for the seven regional offices are as follows:

Region 1 - Northwest - George Marzka, R4, Meadville, PA 15335, 814/336-6890;

Region 2 - North Central - Marlin McClellan, P.O. Box 1475, 675 Rose Street, Williamsport, PA 17703, 717/327-3550;

Region 3 - Northeast - Russell Gunton, Route 92 South, Tunkhannock, PA 18657, 717/836-2181;

Region 4 - Southwest - H. Francis Kennedy, 5349 William Flynn Highway, Gibsonia, PA 15044, 412/443-1585;

Region 5 - Southwest Central - John Drake, Executive Plaza, 614 Howard Avenue, Altoona, PA 16601, 814/946-7315;

Region 6 - Southeast Central - C. Eugene Wingert, P.O. Box 419, Summerdale, PA 17093, 717/787-3400; and

Region 7 - Southeast - Dean Heim, P.O. Box 350, 402 Century Plaza Building, Lansdale, PA 19446, 215/368-3000.

Failure to pay costs N.Y. firm license

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Cimino Brothers Produce Inc., Syracuse, N.Y., has had its produce trading license revoked for failing to pay promptly for fruits and vegetables it received between July, 1979 and March, 1980.

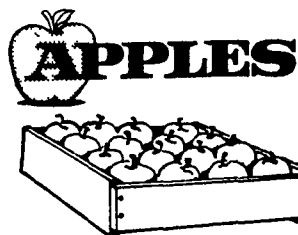
The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which licenses produce firms under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, charged the firm with failure to account truly and correctly for seven lots of consigned produce worth \$20,800 and failure to make full payment for 126 lots purchased at agreed prices totaling \$157,000.

Charles Brader, marketing official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the firm was provided with a copy of the charges against it, but failed to answer.

USDA's Administrative Law Judge John A. Campbell, ruled that the firm had committed willful, repeated, and flagrant violations of the act.

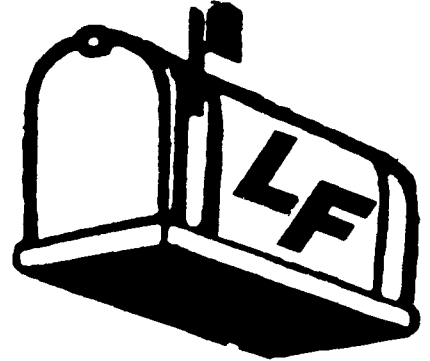
Under Campbell's order, the firm is ineligible to operate a business subject to the act until June, 1983, and then only if a PACA license is obtained. The firm's officers, directors, and major stockholders, Larry S. Cimino, Benjamin B. Cimino, and Joseph A. Cimino, may not be employed by or affiliated with any PACA licensee until June, 1982, and then only if a surety bond is posted and USDA approves.

Under PACA, all interstate traders in fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables must be licensed by USDA. USDA is authorized to suspend or revoke a trader's license for violating the Act.



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