

# Pa. has big stake in acid rain

UNIVERSITY PARK — Acid rain is a fact of life for most of the Northeastern United States including Pennsylvania. "Residents of Pennsylvania have an important stake in the outcome of the acid rain debate," according to James S. Shortle, assistant professor of agricultural economics at Penn State.

Shortle said that the state would benefit from acid rain controls. "Pennsylvania has been characterized as being 'in the eye of the storm,' receiving on the average the most acidic rain in the nation," he said in the May issue of Farm Economics, the monthly economics newsletter of the College of Agriculture.

Added controls will help clear the air, but Pennsylvania stands to lose substantially from a vigorous control program of industries important to the state's economy.

Shortle said there is little doubt that the acid rain is falling. "Acid rain stems from a phenomenon more accurately described as acid deposition," he explained. "Acid-compounds and acid-producing substances are deposited, either wet or dry, from the atmosphere.

"There is little debate that this is

occurring over broad regions of the United States. Wet acid deposition, or acid rain, is easiest to measure and rates in much of the eastern United States have rate of deposit in excess of those that would occur naturally. The highest average deposition rates are centered around eastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania and northern Virginia, according to a recent publication by the Office of Technology Assessment. In this and other areas average wet deposition rates are many times what scientists would expect to occur in nature. Dry deposition averaged over the eastern states has been estimated by computer models to be about equal to wet deposition, or one-half total deposition.

"Measurements of the acidity of precipitation in Pennsylvania indicate the state receives very acidic rain and perhaps more so on average than anywhere else in the country," said Shortle.

A major question facing federal lawmakers on Capitol Hill is whether to strengthen regulation of air pollutants linked to acid rain. The act that largely governs federal air pollution control

regulation - The Clean Air Act - is being considered for reauthorization by Congress. In the process, scientists, environmentalists, and the Canadian government are lobbying Congress to amend the act to provide for immediate and stringent measures to reduce emissions of air pollutants linked to acid rain - primarily, nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>).

The debate on acid rain control entered the political sphere in a major way last year when several legislators promoted legislation to impose new limitations on emissions of SO<sub>2</sub> in the eastern half of the nation.

Two approaches to limiting damage from acid rain are to treat affected sites and to control emissions. Sites can be treated with lime, but the consensus is that the application of this alkaline compound, while beneficial, cannot be relied upon to limit damage from acid deposition. The focus of control proposals is therefore on emissions control.

The acid rain debate centers on three key questions: What can be done to reduce acid deposition, what are the economic impacts,

and how effective are proposed regulatory approaches likely to be? To help answer these questions, Congress established the Interagency Task Force on Acid Precipitation in 1980. The task force has a 10-year research plan to further understanding of the causes and sources of acid deposition; the environmental, social and economic effects of

acid deposition; and remedial measures.

In the meantime, political decision makers are faced with hard questions that have not yet been answered fully by physical and social scientists. They nevertheless must decide to what extent the benefits of emissions control warrant the costs.

## Planting deadline nears for insurance

HARRISBURG, PA. — June 15 is the final planting date for corn, and June 25 is the final planting date for soybean acreage insured by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), or by private companies reinsured by FCIC.

According to Bill Foose, who is the District Director for the Eastern Pennsylvania and Northern New Jersey areas, all acreage of soybeans and corn not planted by the final planting dates must be reported as being planted too late to be insured.

"Farmers who are unable to plant prior to the June final planting dates because of ex-

cessive moisture conditions may wish to sign a 20-day late planting agreement, which permits insurance coverage, but provides for a lower bushel-per-acre guarantee due to the late planting," says Foose.

This late planting agreement is only available when excessive moisture conditions are present, such as many areas have experienced during this year's planting time.

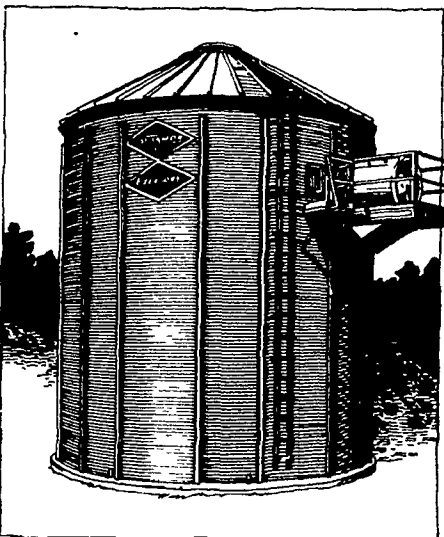
More information about the new late-planting agreement may be obtained by contacting a local, authorized crop insurance agent, or through the County ASCS office located in each county.



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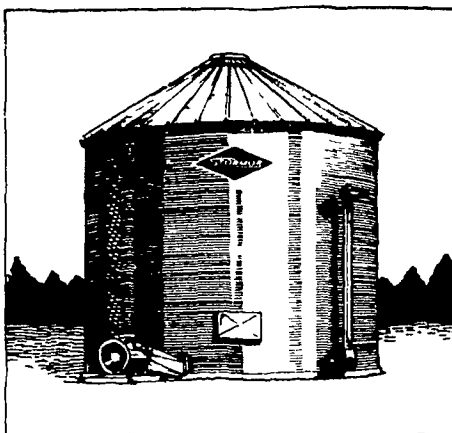
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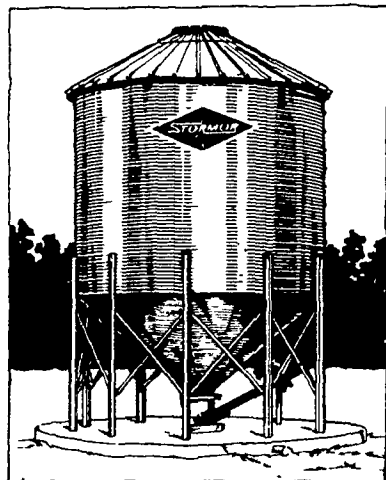
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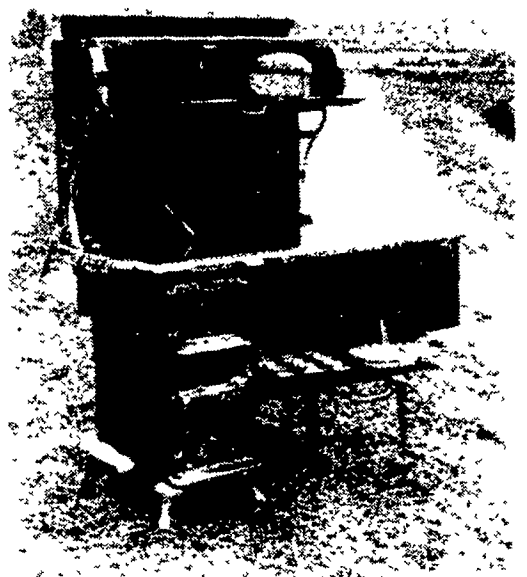
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