

## Pa. Needy Program

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food banks, the Red Cross, Community Action Programs, Area Agencies on the Aging, and dozens of public, private and religious service agencies have joined hands to produce this effort on behalf of our needy families and individuals.

"The system that has been developed in Pennsylvania for delivery of these commodities is the result of more than a year of experience. At one point in time, the Department had signed distribution agreements with 396 local, county and regional organizations to distribute process cheese. Now, however, although these organizations continue to provide their essential time and local knowledge, we are working through our County Commissioners to have a sole responsible coordinating agency in each county. At this time, 55 of our 67 counties are functioning with a single agency serving that coordinating capacity.

"The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is proud of what has been accomplished since January of 1982 at a cost of only \$300,000. The unprecedented use of local governments and volunteers enabled us to assume the responsibility of this program on short notice without additional staff or

cost to the state's taxpayers.

"Pennsylvania's role in this program is that of middleman—working to establish local distribution outlets to best serve local needs, placing orders with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in response to local agency requests, and in some cases, providing cold storage warehouse space to better accommodate local needs for space and timing. We have also assumed the added responsibility for taking representative samples of these commodities as they arrive to insure quality.

"We are working with a statewide volunteer Advisory Committee and the hundreds of local agencies involved to insure that these commodities reach the truly needy of the state most efficiently and effectively. And we are working with the USDA to continually adjust our plans to meet their program changes.

"These program changes, which include varying quantities and allocations, essentially determine which commodities, in what quantities and the time frame for delivery of these commodities to the Commonwealth. In the face of the unpredictable nature of these USDA offerings at times, the job that has been done by the participants in Pennsylvania's pro-

gram has been superb.

"Since the initial announcement of a "cheese distribution" by the President, the Needy Family Commodity Distribution program has expanded to include butter, nonfat dry milk, cornmeal, flour, honey and milled rice. The public expects to see these commodities at the local level, yet the actual quantities which are allocated by USDA based on available surpluses may not serve all those who are needy.

"For example, Pennsylvania's allotments of commodities for the Needy Family Program from July through September, as they stand now, show:

88,000 five-pound bags of cornmeal

280,224 two-pound bags of milled rice

204,000 three-pound cans of honey and 144,000 five-pound bags of A.P. flour.

"Butter shipments scheduled for September into Pennsylvania include three trucks—115,236 one-pound blocks. These figures make it obvious that with 1.25 million families being served, allocations are necessary, and we are dealing with that necessity through cooperation of agencies and the Advisory Committee.

"Since the passage of P.L. 98-8 (The Jobs Bill) our involvement in food and feeding programs has been expanded even further to include foods distributed to

cooperative emergency feeding facilities such as soup kitchens, temporary shelters and hunger centers which prepare on-site meals. That bill additionally provided funding to the state to reimburse costs for administering the Needy Family Program through to the local level. With state approval for these funds only recently passed, we will seek a statewide coordinated effort to make best use of the funding. The Statewide Task Force on the Jobs Bill, which includes representatives of the United Way, County Commissioners Association and many other social service organizations, will consider these uses.

"The state's 1983-1984 budget provides an additional appropriation of \$8 million to supplement these hunger programs. I can assure the Committee, that based on the performance record of the past 18 months, these surplus food products will reach our truly needy individuals and families at a most reasonable cost.

"These programs, and the other programs which deal with government donated surplus commodities, are coordinated by our Bureau of Government Donated Food, which transferred to the Department of Agriculture in July, 1981. Since that time, the role of the Bureau has greatly expanded.

"While additional responsibilities were being placed on the

Bureau, we have been working to streamline its procedures, to provide a more workable and efficient system for the distribution of donated foods through other ongoing programs.

"This year the commercial warehouses which store government donated food were selected after a bidding procedure, and after taking local agencies' needs and transportation costs into consideration. We expect the end result of this action will be easier access to the commodities for local participating agencies.

"In summary, Mr. Chairman, I feel that through cooperation, planning and a tremendous volunteer effort by Pennsylvania's local governments, food banks and charitable organizations, Pennsylvania's 1.25 million needy families have been well served by this federal program.

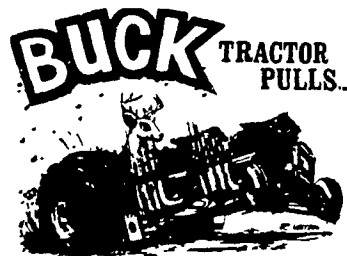
"The thousands of individuals, hundreds of social service organizations like Catholic Social Services and the United Way, for example, and the dozens of county and local governments who have participated in this program have made it possible.

"What began as a one-time distribution of surplus government donated cheese, has now resulted in 19.5 million pounds of cheese and nine million pounds of butter being placed in the hands of Pennsylvania's needy—more than \$42.5 million of these foods distributed for just \$300,000. That is a ratio of better than \$1,417 of commodities distributed for every one dollar in storage or distribution costs—a record I would challenge anyone to match.

"We are proud of our role in serving as a clearinghouse for orders, scheduling and delivery of these commodities for distribution, and we will continue our efforts to fine tune the system and respond to both local needs and federal program changes.

"I look forward to working with these agencies, the advisory council and the General Assembly in continuing this program's exemplary service to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

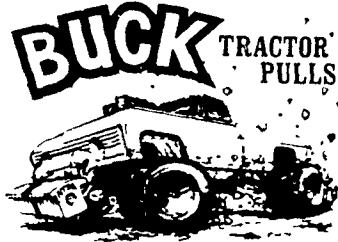
"At this time, I would be pleased to answer any questions you or the Committee may have.



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