

Grange asks PMMB to issue drought emergency

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania State Grange has formally requested the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board to hold hearings to issue a drought emergency order, temporarily raising the price of milk by one to two cents per quart to offset increased costs to dairy farmers brought on by the drought. The request was made at the regular monthly meeting of the Board.

Testifying for the Grange, State Master Charles Wismer said the

program would apply to areas most severely affected by the drought, specifically, milk marketing orders I, II and IV. A drought emergency order was issued by the Milk Marketing Board from Jan. 1 to March 3, 1964. The program raised the price of milk by one cent per quart with 40 cents per hundredweight paid to the dairy farmer.

"The Spring was extremely wet, causing corn to be planted late.. then we had a drought with record

breaking temperatures and hot, dry winds which caused extensive damage to crops," Wismer told Board members. "The drought has caused a 30 to 80 percent estimated yield loss for corn and hay, according to Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service figures. In monetary terms, \$107.5 million was lost in grain corn, \$50 million in silage corn, and \$39 million in hay for the 18 declared disaster counties."

As a result of the drought and the federal Payment-in-Kind grain

acreage set aside program, feed corn has risen \$1.50 per bushel since January, Wismer said. Soybean meal, a major source of protein for dairy cows, has risen in price by \$50 per ton.

"Dairy farmers are being hit in several directions," Wismer said. "Crop yields are down so they have to purchase more feed grain at higher market prices. As a final blow, most third cuttings of hay were non-existent in disaster counties."

Wismer said the temporary

increase would help ease the blow to dairy farmers while not over-taxing consumers.

Following the Grange's testimony, the Milk Marketing Board voted to defer action on the temporary emergency order "until finite figures could be obtained from the Crop Reporting Service in 1983 crop yields." Chairman George Brumbaugh said the board would, however, "continue to monitor and study the effect of drought conditions as a result of the Grange's request."

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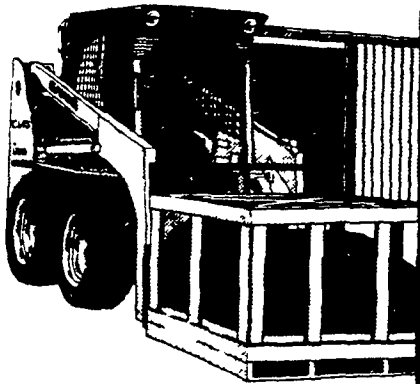


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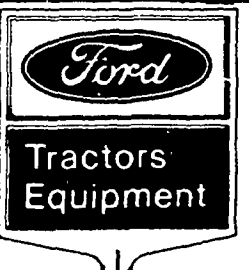
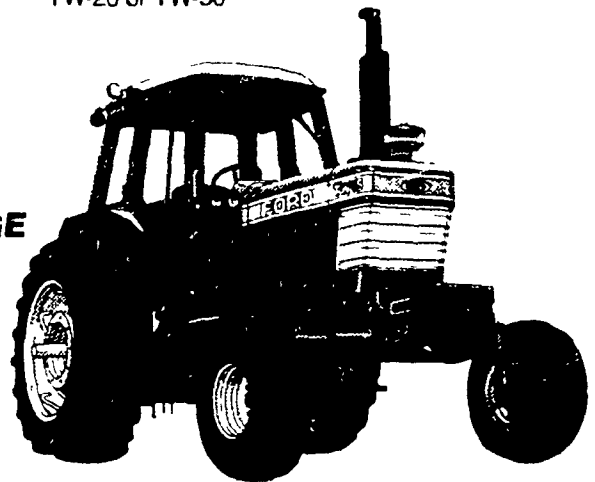
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