

More needy families to get food in Pa.

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has announced changes in the eligibility guidelines for the Title II (Needy Family) Food Program which will make an additional 240,000 state households eligible to receive the federal surplus foods beginning July 1.

State Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell said that USDA has approved the revisions in the guidelines which increase the household size and income schedules for food distribution in the program.

Through the state's initiative in seeking additional quantities of cheese and butter from the federal program, Pennsylvania will now

be receiving an additional two million pounds of cheese and butter valued at more than \$3 million each quarter. Hallowell said USDA has agreed to increase Pennsylvania's allocation by 1.6 million pounds of cheese and 432,000 pounds of butter each quarter.

"The revised guidelines expand the number of eligible Pennsylvania families by increasing the income requirement from 130 to 150 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines," Hallowell said. "Effective with July distributions, a family of four will be eligible to receive cheese, butter and other commodities if the total household income is less than \$15,300. Under previous

guidelines, the income limit for a family of four was \$12,780."

"This change will make approximately 240,000 more Pennsylvania families eligible to participate in the program," he said. "Fully one-third of these households are senior citizens age 65 and older."

Hallowell said other changes in the guidelines will increase the amount of foods available to a household. "We are recommending that families of one or two people receive one five-pound block of cheese, three to five person families receive two five-pound blocks of cheese, and households of six persons or more will receive three five-pound blocks," he said.

"The cooperation and assistance of the Boards of County Commissioners throughout the state is unprecedented, and has enabled us to make these positive changes and adjustments in the program," Hallowell said. "Their continued support, and that of the coordinating agencies, hundreds of recipient agencies and thousands of volunteers will insure that as many needy individuals as possible can receive these commodities in the future."

Pennsylvania ranks fourth in the nation in total pounds of surplus federal foods distributed under the program, with approximately 70 million pounds valued at more than \$100,000,000. The state ranks

second in the nation in total pounds of food distributed per capita.

Hallowell said that with the new guidelines, Pennsylvania would continue quarterly distribution of cheese and butter, and monthly distribution of low volume commodities such as powdered milk, honey, cornmeal and flour.

"Quarterly distributions of butter and cheese reduces the direct costs involved, encourages pre-registration of eligible recipients, aids in advance planning at the local level, and increases the efficiency of the program," Hallowell said. "We will continue to adjust this program, and to build on the tremendous record already set by the agencies involved in serving the state's needy families."

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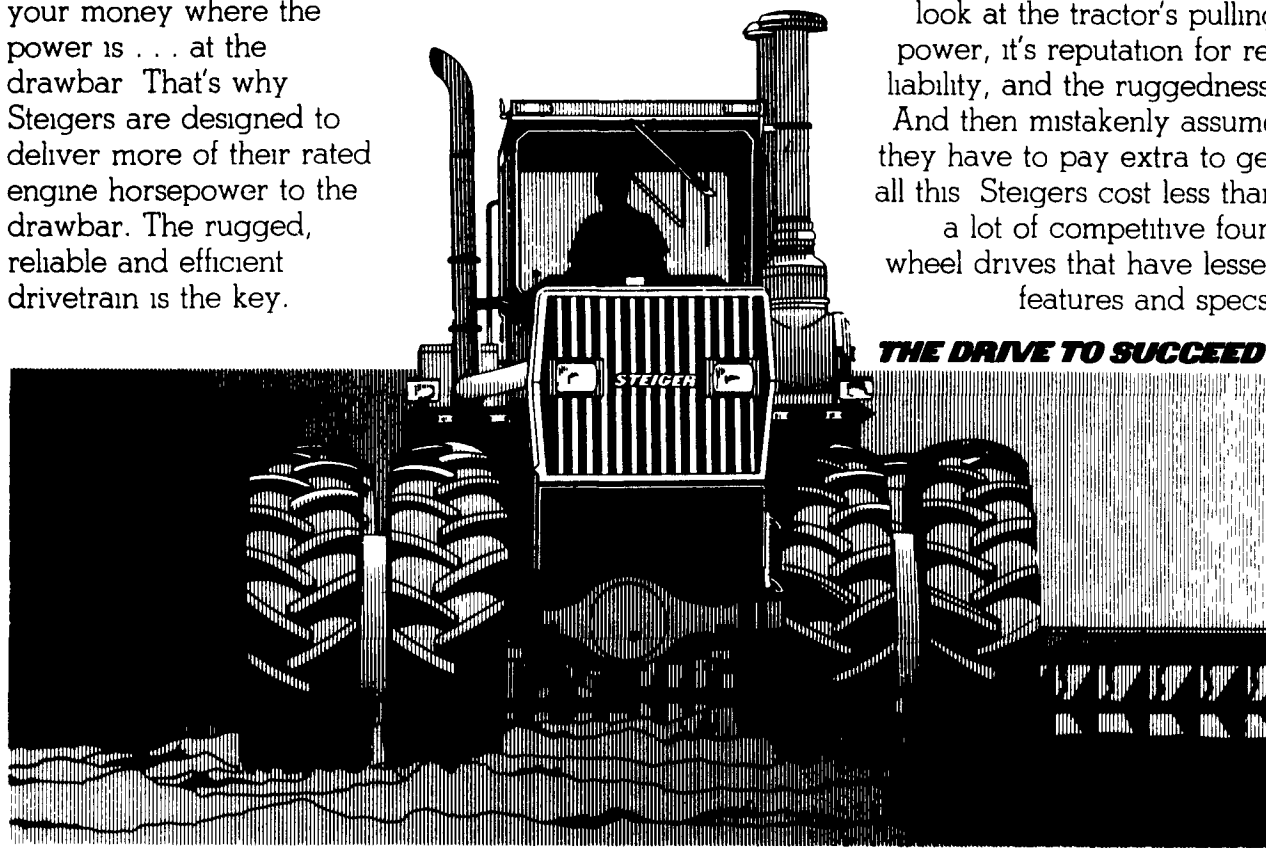
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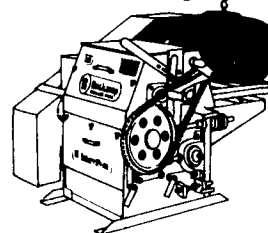
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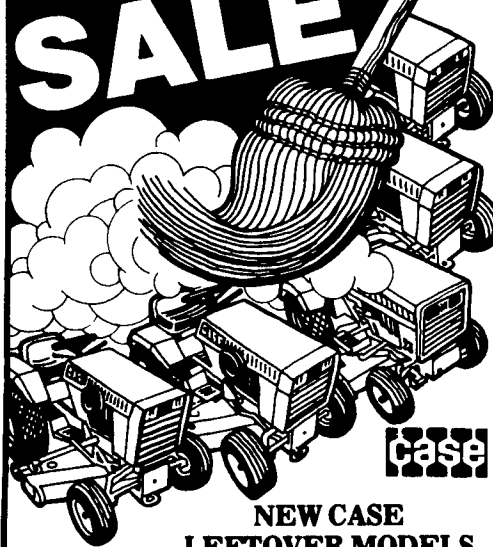
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