

Still room to dry out in Pa. fields

HARRISBURG — Producers across the state during the week ending July 15 were still fighting heavy rains but averaged 4 suitable days for fieldwork. Activities included hay making; spraying corn; trimming pastures; top dressing hay fields; harvesting wheat, barley, cabbage and raspberries.

SOIL MOISTURE: Topsoil moisture supplies for the state were reported as adequate by 32

percent and 68 percent of our reporters rated it surplus. The northern region reported 100 percent surplus. The central and southern regions were very similar in their soil supplies with the central ratings being 56 percent adequate and 44 percent surplus while the southern region reported supply ratings of 57 percent adequate and 43 percent surplus.

CORN HEIGHT: Corn height

across the state averaged 32 inches, still trailing last year's height of 34 inches.

WHEAT HARVEST BEGINNING: In the Commonwealth 39 percent of the wheat crop was turning yellow, 45 percent ripe and 9 percent harvested. At this time last year, 37 percent was turning yellow, 31 percent ripe and 24 percent harvested. The northern region reported 76 percent turning yellow, and a few field ripe and already harvested. Central region farmers reported 40 percent turning yellow, 52 percent ripe and 6 percent harvested. The southern region reported 79 percent of the wheat crop as ripe and 21 percent harvested.

BARLEY HARVEST REACHES HALFWAY MARK: Throughout the state, it was reported that 19 percent of the barley crop was turning yellow, 26 percent ripe and 51 percent harvested compared to last year's total of 16 percent turning yellow, 19 percent ripe and 61 percent harvested. In the northern region, 25 percent of the crop was turning yellow, 42 percent ripe and 17 percent harvested. Central growers reported 26 percent turning yellow, 29 percent ripe and 45 percent harvested. The southern

section reported nearly all of the barley harvested.

OATS: Oats were reported as 68 percent headed and 23 percent turning yellow compared to last year's reports of 57 percent headed and 31 percent turning yellow. Northern growers estimated that 66 percent of the oat crop was headed with 6 percent turning yellow. Central region reports claimed 81 percent headed, 14 percent turning yellow while the southern region had 50 percent headed, 40 percent turning yellow and 10 percent ripe.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: The harvest of tart cherries and raspberries is underway. Grape producers are still reporting cases of black rot in their orchards. Potato plants are blossoming and some sweet corn is in tassel. Southern reporters are beginning to see some locally grown tomatoes. There are some reports of white mold on the snap beans in the southern region and also some problems with crusting in the soybean crop.

HAY AND PASTURE CONDITIONS: First cutting of alfalfa was 87 percent complete, while at this time last year it was virtually complete. Second cutting of alfalfa

was 26 percent complete, behind last year's harvest of 37 percent. CLO-TIM was 78 percent harvested, trailing last year's amount of 91 percent. The quality of hay made during the past week was rated poor by 39 percent of the reporters, fair by 45 percent and good quality by 16 percent of those reporting. The amount of feed being obtained from pastures is mostly average to above average.

THE NATION AS OF JULY 8: Farmers had four to six days suitable for fieldwork across most of the nation. Winter wheat combined advanced rapidly, reaching 51 percent completion, slightly ahead of the 49 percent average. Corn was rated fair to mostly good in most regions; 4 percent of the acreage was silking. Soybeans were 98 percent planted, with most remaining acreage to be double-cropped. New Jersey producers began picking peaches. Cherry picking got underway in Michigan and New York. Vegetable harvesting declined seasonally across the South, but increased in northern regions. Pastures and ranges were in fair to good condition, except in portions of Texas and the Southwest where conditions were poor.

Task force to study needs of rural Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — The needs of Pennsylvania's 3.6 million rural residents will be represented at the highest levels of state government with the creation of a special task force to advise the Governor and the General Assembly on rural issues.

The 12-member advisory board is the product of legislation co-sponsored by state Rep. Sam Morris, D-Chester, and signed into law by Governor Thornburgh last Friday.

Morris co-sponsored the legislation last November following a report by the House Democratic Policy Committee which concluded the problems of rural Pennsylvania have been largely unrecognized or ignored.

That report stated, "In the absence of clearly defined geographical boundaries or sharply delineated issues (in rural areas), public and legislative attention has generally been focused on issues where there are pressing immediate needs and an identifiable constituency."

Established within the Governor's Office, the Task Force on Rural Issues will consist of six legislative members appointed by the leaders of the House and Senate and six members named by the Governor.

With a \$500,000 appropriation, it will gather research information on rural problems on its own and through the use of outside agencies, including colleges, universities and private organizations; conduct public hearings on rural needs; develop ways to improve government services in rural Pennsylvania, including proposed legislation, and make an annual

report to the Governor and the General Assembly on its findings and recommendations.

The task force is the second proposal by the Democratic policy committee that has been adopted to focus greater attention on the Commonwealth's rural areas. Earlier, the Democratic leadership of the House created a new Subcommittee on Rural Affairs within the Agriculture Committee to develop and review legislation related to rural Pennsylvania.

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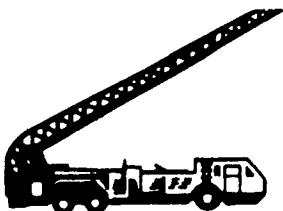
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