

## Delaware expert says farm policy may be set soon

NEWARK, DE - If the 1985 farm bill follows the route to passage of the last one four years ago, farmers and others who want to communicate their views to the Congress about proposed farm policy should wait no longer.

"The 1981 farm bill wasn't passed until December, but Congress had virtually set its limits months before by budget reconciliation measures," says University of Delaware extension farm policy specialist Gerald Vaughn. "The same procedures, if used again, could largely shape the 1985 farm bill as early as May."

In 1974 Congress passed the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act, better

known as the "budget act." The procedures it outlined called for Congress to set budget totals before considering action on individual appropriations. "Under this act, the Senate and House—by adopting two budget resolutions (the first to occur on May 15)—put a ceiling on total expenditures and then allocate spending limits to the standing committees on agriculture and other programs," Vaughn explains. "The standing committees then revise their budget plans to be in line with the spending limits. A second budget resolution must be passed by September 15."

The first budget resolution in May is only a guide to

congressional budget action, the economist says. It doesn't have the force of law. However, the second budget resolution in September, which may revise the first, is binding on appropriations. In practice, the September resolution differs little from the May resolution.

According to Vaughn, the budget act strongly influenced the farm bill that emerged in 1981. He says the tight lid put on farm program spending compelled congressional agriculture committees to redirect farm and food policy before the 1981 farm bill draft was even considered. And it provided the administration with a powerful reason for threatening to veto any

farm bill that exceeded the congressional budget limits.

"If Congress is serious about substantially reducing the federal budget deficit, and reducing the cost of farm programs in the process, limits set by the May

budget resolution could govern the outcome of the 1985 farm bill debate," Vaughn believes.

"Now is the time to contact members of Congress," he says, "especially members of the Senate and House budget committees."

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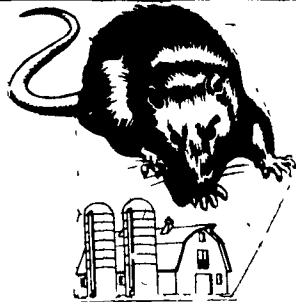
Controlled removal of excess water helps increase production and provides additional fertile cropland on most existing farms,

says Extension agricultural engineers at Penn State.

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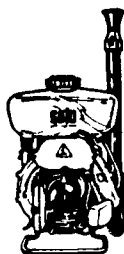
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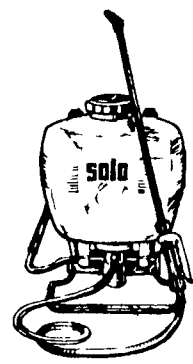


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