

Drought Crop Losses Heavy

(Continued from Page A1)

income generator in Maryland and is suffering less stress than field crops due to more available irrigation.

Tobacco the fourth high economically important crop faces this drought year with several strikes against it, including a drought three years ago. Prices have been dropping steadily and consumer and export demands are down. There is concern that for struggling tobacco growers this drought of 1986 could be the final blow.

According to reports in the Baltimore Sun, Carroll County, which lies south of York and Adams Counties, is hardest hit in Maryland.

"We're estimating a \$12.3 million crop loss," says Carroll County extension agent David Green. "Total ag production in the county is about \$60 million."

Green adds that he anticipates some sale for corn to be put in silos. Ensiling corn originally intended for grain use could help salvage a few dollars per acre for growers, while filling silos for dairy or livestock producers

caught short on forage supplies.

According to Green, alfalfa hay was selling a week ago at the Westminster Hay Auction for \$130 to \$150 per ton. Even new timothy commands prices in the \$90 to \$120 per ton range.

"Some of it's coming from pretty far away," affirms Green. "We had reports of one load coming down from Williamsport, Pa."

Grain yields in both York County and neighboring Maryland counties were average to good in some areas.

"It's amazing," Green adds, "that we got the small grain yields we did. That could help play a large part in feed supplies later on. And the grain market prices are still extremely low."

According to Walker, recent federal legislation has made less funds available for emergency use, part of the belt tightening process of Gramm-Rudman and budget balancing. "This upcoming fiscal year is the last in which emergency loans will be available unless new legislation is passed."

Instead, farmers are increasingly being encouraged to enroll in the federal crop insurance

program subsidized by the federal government. Farmers can thus elect to gamble against the weather, paying a premium and hoping to cut their losses in the event of disastrous growing conditions.

Walker notes that from 1981 to 1985 the nation's farmers paid federal crop insurance premiums of \$291 million and collected claims worth \$543 million.

"It's still less costly for the government to subsidize the federal crop insurance program than to make direct disaster payments," says Walker.

Farmers anticipating eligibility and application for low interest

loans through Farmers Home Administration should get their records in order, advises York FmHA administrator Douglas J. Gabel. "We'll need good complete crop records for this year and for the past five years for establishing a history of production," Gabel suggests.

Green summarizes best what

most farmers in drought stricken areas are saying: "Don't send money, send rain."

But even if the drought ended tomorrow — and long-range weather forecasts promise little relief for the next 30 days — for some crops it is already too late.

And for some hard-pressed farmers it may be too late already.

Approximately 25 percent of ice cream is consumed through "bulk" servings (retail shops, restaurants, universities, etc.). Twenty-five percent is purchased in the form of novelty items, and the remaining 50 percent is packaged and sold for home use.

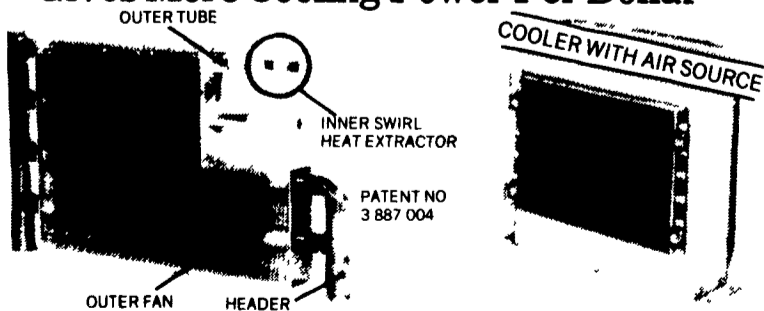
More ice cream is consumed on Sunday than any other day of the week, with consumption generally higher on the weekends.



Wilted corn, stunted alfalfa, desiccated beans, and other wizened crops are common scenes resulting from the drought in York County and lead to the area being declared a disaster area on Thursday.

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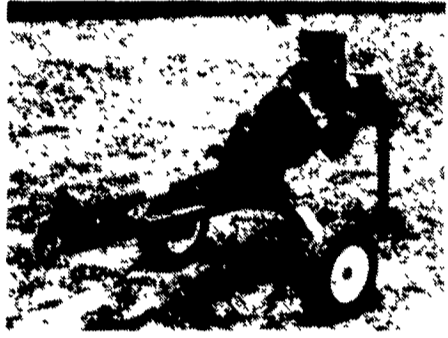


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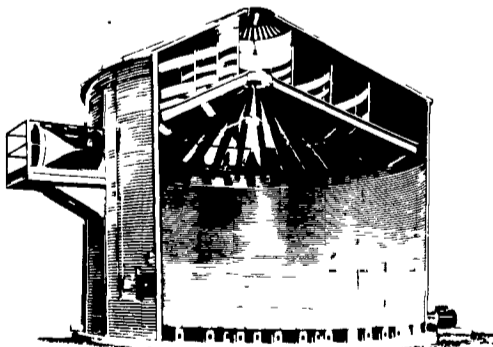
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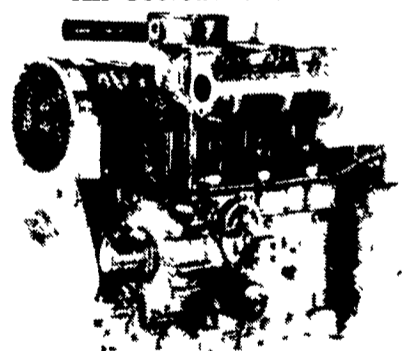
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