

Lycoming Countians Remember And Reach Out

Ill Wind Of '85 Blows Kindness For '86 Drought Victims

BY JOYCE BUPP

York County Correspondent

ELIMSPORT — Farm families in a picturesque mountain valley in central Pennsylvania have turned a devastating memory into a helping hand for other farms in need.

Friday evening, May 31, 1985, will not soon be forgotten on the farms that dot this valley at the southeast base of White Deer Mountain. That was the night destruction roared over the ridge, splintered and scattered trees down the hardwood forest mountainside, and then laid a path of waste through the peaceful rural community.

That was the night a tornado flattened seven barns, ripped apart homes, blew away roofing, tossed around outbuildings and wreaked general havoc to the community, farmers' livings, and the emotional well-being of young and old alike in this southern tip of Lycoming County.

"It had been such a gorgeous night; I remember because I had walked out to get the paper," recalls Patricia Ulrich. She, her husband Charles, and their family, operate a dairy and crops farm at Allenwood R1, near the foot of the mountain.

Then, with no warning, the storm front which raced across the northern part of Pennsylvania that evening, leaving destruction and death in many communities, covered the moon with black clouds and descended into White Deer Valley with a wail like an oncoming freight train.

When the moon again shown in a matter of minutes, in its glow lay ground white with hail and farmsteads twisted and flattened like matchsticks.

"The reaction of people was wonderful. Sunday the churches closed down. Instead of services, congregations went to the farms and fields. They'd form a line across the end of a field, and just work their way across, picking up the unbelievable amounts of pieces of buildings, roofs, machinery, household items," says Patricia.

Numerous work crews arrived from other parts of the state, including several forces of Amish builders who immediately began restoring barns and houses. Disaster relief volunteers brought assorted skills, from building to clean up to providing meals. Neighbors milked cows and tended other livestock for those whose barns had exploded into splintered bits littered across unknown acres.

"It was because of the outpouring of help and response after the tornado that we wanted to do something to help when we read about farmer's severe drought problems in the South this sum-

mer," continues Pat Ulrich. "Someone at Sunday School mentioned that maybe we could send some hay from around here."

Pat Ulrich went home and made a few phone calls. Someone had suggested that farmers might be able to take hay off the State Game Lands holdings in the valley. With the assistance of local legislator Al Bush, permission was obtained. However, the hay had to be harvested by Sept. 15, to allow regrowth on the grasses for winter wildlife feed and cover. Earlier cuttings had been harvested, and the volume and quality of the grass forage was ideal for what the ElimSPORT community had in mind.

On Sept. 1, — appropriately, Labor Day — the first mowers moved onto the 90-plus acres of grasses. Before the job was completed, mowings were made at these separate times. Up to nine haybines at a time swathed the forage, and as many as seven balers followed in their paths a few days later.

"We had the best haymaking weather of the entire season," Pat marvels of how the entire hay donation operation "just fell into place." Through her making the initial phone contacts, Mrs. Ulrich was named the ElimSPORT coordinator of the project. Still, she refuses credit for the generous community spirit outpouring which followed.

Before the job was complete, approximately 7,000 bales had been harvested from the Game Commission fields, and another 550 donated. Some was stored temporarily in empty World War II underground ammunition bunkers located on the government-owned property, until it could be loaded out.

The first load went to Randolph County, Ala., to a very small farm community. That contact was made, and the load delivered, through Robert Russell and Massimo Fremiotti, co-owners of Watsontown Trucking Company.

Two more loads went out to Alabama, one costing the pay to the driver. Local donations, handled through the ElimSPORT Methodist Parish, anted up the full cost of \$1,100 to send the third load.

Local newspapers picked up the story and interest in the haylift spread. The Frito-Lay snack company out of Williamsport sent a truck, plus manpower to help load it, and hauled a trailerful to Alabama and Georgia.

Then, the ElimSPORT haymakers learned of hay shortages due to severe drought in York County. Many York counties had been among those who came to help in the tornado's wake. And Charlie Sellers came into the picture.

Sellers, of Spring Grove R4, is



Part of the group which made and sent hay from Lycoming County in thanks for the help they received from farmers in York County after the 1985 tornado devastated their Lycoming County farms. Pictured from left, Harold Drick, Fred Nill, John Anderson, Eric Stamen, Charles and Pat Ulrich, Charles Sellers, John Bower, Hal Drick, Jim Tentz and Max Fruman.

the southern district of Pennsylvania Disaster Response coordinator for the Church of the Brethren. The Brethren Church's haylift efforts were in co-operation with Farmer-To-Farmer, a program handled in cooperation with the Rural Advancement Fund, National Council of Churches and United Farmers Organization.

Working with the York Agricultural Extension offices, contacts were made by Sellers to deliver hay at cost to qualifying farmers short of livestock feed. A total of 10 loads eventually went into empty York County dairy farm hay mows.

Charles Ulrich mentioned one day after hay loading that an ice cream party for all those involved in the hay making, loading and donations might be an appropriate celebration. On Sunday evening, Oct. 5, more than 100 participants and supporters of the ElimSPORT Haylift gathered in the community hall for fellowship and more homemade ice cream and cake than even the hungriest crowd would ever finish. Slides of the haylift and a film on tornadoes was shown by Charlie Sellers, and the

Lewisburg Barbershop singers provided musical entertainment.

"What's so wonderful was how one called one, and each called another, and another. There was no struggle to get help; nothing was hard; even the weather cooperated," says Patricia Ulrich. "It just all came together, that's been the nicest part of this. The way the idea came up and just fell into place ... it seemed as though it was just supposed to happen."

A rough scar still angles down the south face of White Deer Mountain, mute testimony to the path taken last spring by the devastating tornado. Built already, green brush is beginning to grow over the barren-path of gnarled and broken trees, as the healing begins.

In the mountain valley below, shiny new buildings stand among the checkerboard of corn, hay, beans and cows once again grazing in their home meadows. And in the homes of those lives torn apart by the destruction of whirling winds, healing has been hastened by the passing on to other farmers of the kindnesses shown here just one harvest season ago.



Charles Sellers, Southern District coordinator for Disaster Response, Church of the Brethren, lines up two more loads of hay.

Weed Control Possible With Conservation Tillage

MOUNT JOY — This fall is a good time to consider beginning or expanding a conservation tillage program. Changing field work patterns may be the best place to start, says an agronomist for a leading seed company.

"Leaving residue on the ground instead of plowing or disking after harvest keeps a protective blanket over the field. During a heavy rain, surface residue cuts down on run off and lets rain soak into the soil where it will be available for the next year's crop. Ground cover also traps snow fall. Roots remaining in the ground decay over the winter forming small canals which increase moisture penetration and help decrease compaction," says Bill Fleet, area agronomist for Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.

However, eliminating fall tillage does not mean losing control of weeds. Good control is attainable in no-till corn production, but it requires attention to details. A sound knowledge of the types of weeds — annual and perennial — and residue present, herbicide capability, and spray equipment and operation is necessary, Fleet says.

Some no-till weed control

programs begin in the fall with an application of Roundup and/or Banvel or atrazine. A spring follow-up treatment with a residual herbicide combination would be used for control of broadleaf weeds and grasses. Herbicide selection is determined by the type and number of problem weeds.

As an alternative, Paraquat or Roundup may be used in spring for initial burndown, the Pioneer Agronomist continues. Depending on the weeds present, these her-

bicides may be tank mixed with other residuals to give complete control. In some cases, atrazine and Princep can be applied up to six weeks before planting. Roundup or Paraquat and Banvel plus 2,4-D may be added to the tank mix.

Split shot treatments are also popular. These treatments utilize early spring application of herbicides such as atrazine followed by at plant treatments such as Princep plus atrazine with Roundup and/or Banvel or 2,4-D.

PFA Right To Know Seminars Set

CAMP HILL — The Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA) is sponsoring Right-to-Know Seminars especially designed for farmers

"The Right-to-Know law goes into effect on December 1", said Steve Crawford, Governmental Relations Division of PFA. "The law places certain responsibilities on farmers, including employee training, recordkeeping and written inventories of chemicals on the farm," added Crawford.

The Seminars will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the following

locations:

November 6 — Lehigh Valley Inn, Routes 22/78, McArthur Road, Allentown, Pa.

November 14 — Holiday Inn, I-81, Exit 28, Grantville, Pa.

November 25 — Howard Johnson Motor Inn, Routes 79/80, Mercer, Pa.

There is a \$25 registration fee which will include lunch, breaks and materials. The seminars are open to all farmers.

To register, call Steve Crawford at PFA's Governmental Relations Division, (717) 761-2740.



Some hay was stored in underground cement bunkers, once used to store military ammunition, prior to shipment to York County.