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'Normal' Weather Prevails, Crop Growth On Schedule

BY MARTHA J. GEHRINGER
LITITZ — Most areas of Pennsylvania are within one inch of normal rainfall and the current weather pattern indicates normal rainfall should occur for the remainder of the growing season.

"At this point the indications are that we are in a normal weather regime and there is no reason to expect it to change. We are certainly in a different weather pattern than last year," said Paul Knight, Penn State meteorologist.

"Last year there was a significant to disastrous drought in the Southeast United States," the weather prognosticator said. At this time last year the expansion of

the drought into the southeast portion of Pennsylvania was just beginning, he added.

From April 1 to June 1 last year rainfall in the Lancaster area was 6.02 inches, 1.72 inches below normal. For the same period this year, 7.59 inches of rain was recorded, .15 inches below normal. "An insignificant amount," Knight commented.

John Yocum of the Penn State Research Farm in Landisville noted, "Right now, surface wise, things look good." At the Landisville station, Yocum recorded 13.6 inches of rain from January to May 1986 and 12.05 for the same

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Making hay while the sun shines on a beautiful Thursday afternoon, Levi Rohrer, 754 Doe Run Road, Lititz, was raking a substantial crop of mixed hay and hoped to have it baled before sundown.

Farmers Home Funds Available At Banks

CAMP HILL — There's a new program that Farmers' Home Administration borrowers need to become familiar with. That is the guaranteed loan program which has been available through the Farmers' Home Administration since 1972. According to the Pennsylvania Farmers Assn.

It's a program that both farmers and lending institutions in Pennsylvania need to learn more about.

The Farmers' Home Administration was formed in 1935 to help family farmers regain self-sufficiency lost during the Depression. Since then, the agency has expanded to become a broadbased rural lender, making

loans to farmers, rural residents and rural communities.

By federal law their credit policy states that those borrowers who qualify for credit from commercial or cooperative lenders are ineligible for FmHA financing. Thus, for farmers, FmHA is a lender of "last resort." Even though a farmer is facing financial difficulty, if he can show an ability to fulfill the terms and conditions of an FmHA loan he can be financed.

In the 1940s a revolving fund, Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund, was established to provide

the resources for FmHA's housing and rural development program. With the housing boom of the 1950s, FmHA began lending monies to rural home buyers in addition to farmers.

The Rural Development Act of 1972 authorized FmHA to guarantee loans made by commercial lenders. Commercial lenders have been very slow to participate in this program. The recent financial distress experienced by traditional FmHA borrowers has caused a significant increase in growth of farm loan programs.

The types of FmHA farm loans available are:

• **FARM OPERATING LOANS (OL)** which enable farmers to obtain short- and intermediate-term financing.

• **FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS (FO)** which enable family-sized farmers lacking other sources of credit to buy, improve, or refinance farm real estate.

• **EMERGENCY DISASTER LOANS (EM)** which help farmers recover from actual production and physical losses inflicted by

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Big Berries



Over along Landis Valley Road near Lancaster they're picking strawberries with a backhoe this year. Jim Hershey, 7, has his hands full with two quarts of the outsized berries that his mother Ruth plucked from the Hershey family's acre-plus patch on Monday. Ruth and her husband John say these are the biggest berries they've had since starting the patch eight years ago. "My husband says he never saw strawberries like these," says Ruth, adding that her spouse has been picking berries for more than 30 years. What's the secret? Plenty of rain and hot weather, says Ruth. "The hotter it is, the sweeter they get." Anyone for strawberry longcake?

Crops Are 'Herbicide' In Rodale Research

BY JACK HUBLEY

KUTZTOWN — No matter what you grow, weeds are the first competition you'll encounter along the rocky, uncertain road to turning a profit. And how you deal with those weeds has a lot to do with your bottom line after the crop hits the marketplace.

Traditionally, farmers try to nip weed problems in the bud, attacking them with an arsenal of herbicides that normally gets the job done when timing and application procedures fall into place. But herbicides up inputs in the form of purchase price, equipment costs and man-hours.

According to the Rodale Research Center, there's a better way; a way that can reduce inputs with the added benefit of avoiding unpleasant consequences when herbicides run off or leach into groundwater. Rodale advocates letting the plants fight their own battles.

Located in Kutztown, the research center's aim is to devise cropping systems that are economically viable and environmentally sound. Some of their latest research involves producing soybeans together with cereal grains using a technique called interseeding. Research is being conducted at two locations in Lancaster County: the Lloyd Lefever farm near Conestoga and the Jim Nissley farm near

Elizabethtown.

Interseeding involves sowing soybeans into an established stand of cereal grains, such as wheat, barley or oats. "Basically, the strategy is to beat the spring weeds," says Rodale agronomist Steve Peters.

With the help of Chesapeake Bay program funding through the State Department of Environmental Resources, Rodale established three different test plantings on the Lefever farm. In one treatment

soybeans were interseeded into winter barley. The barley was planted last fall and received 35 pounds of nitrogen per acre. The soybeans were planted on 7-inch rows with a Tye no-till drill on April 30. No herbicides were used on either the beans or the barley.

In a second treatment the barley and soybeans were double-cropped, with both crops receiving nitrogen and herbicide.

The final treatment involved

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Eight Young Jersey Dairymen Named

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Eight young Jersey breeders and their families have been selected by the Board of Directors of The American Jersey Cattle Club to receive The Young Jersey Dairymen Award. Presentations will be made June 26 at the AJCC Awards Breakfast at the Civic Center, Eau Claire, Wis., during the AJCC 119th Annual Meeting.

These awards are presented annually to young Jersey breeders who merit recognition for their expertise in dairy farming, Jersey cattle breeding, participation in AJCC programs and leadership in

Jersey activities.

Ralph and Lillian Ashton, Payette, Idaho, took ownership of their Payette Jerseys from Ralph's father in 1978 and it's been all up-hill from there. Their 41 cows on official DHIA test averaged 15,352 pounds milk and 730 pounds butterfat, higher by a wide margin than any other Idaho Jersey herd.

The milk from their 100 percent registered Jersey herd is marketed through Idaho Milk Producers Association, of which Ralph is treasurer. Their milk

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