

Farmworkers Too Eager To Sue, Says Eckel

BIGLERVILLE—The leader of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA) today told a U. S. House subcommittee that Legal Services Corporation attorneys are often too eager to file lawsuits against farmers over minor grievances by seasonal farmworkers. Keith Eckel of Clarks Summit,

Lackawanna County, president of PFA and a farm employer, informed the Labor Standards Subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee that the statewide farm organization is supporting legislation to reform the federal Legal Services Corporation Act.

Eckel explained, "Growers feel Legal Service attorneys are too quick to file lawsuits against employers. In many instances, complaints, problems and disputes could be handled through discussion and negotiation. In many cases, employers are not even aware of a complaint by a worker

until he is served notice of a lawsuit.

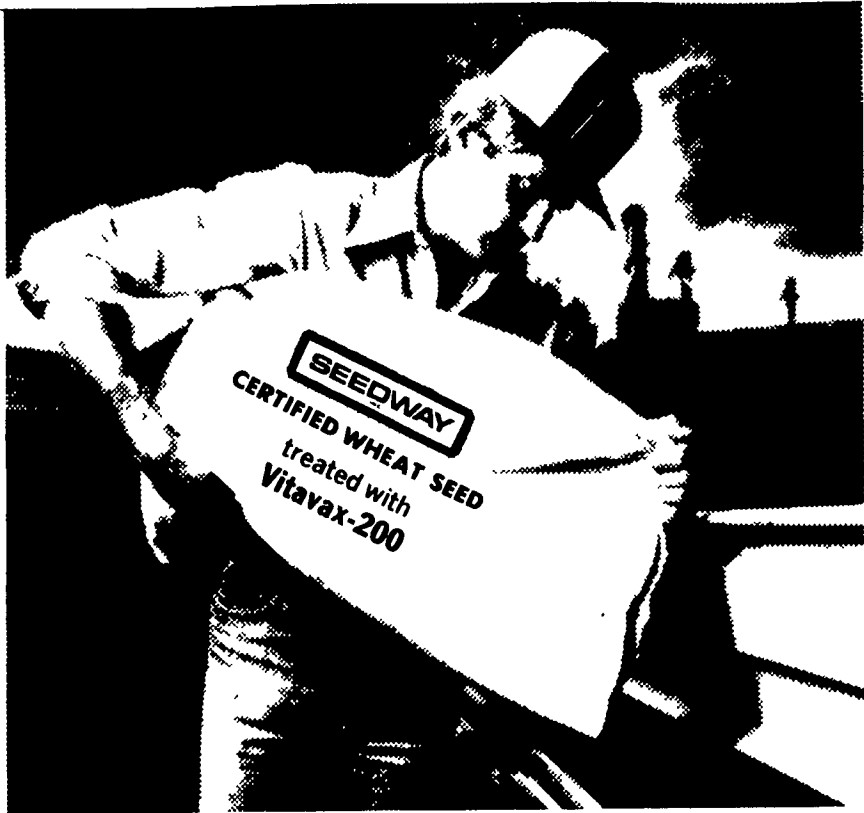
"Often Legal Service Corporation attorneys file lawsuits involving insignificant issues such as small wage payment claims. These suits are many times resolved through rather large settlements. Unfortunately often very little, if

any, of the total dollar amount goes to the farmworkers involved. The vast majority of the settlement goes to the Legal Services Corporation for services rendered."

Eckel said PFA and its national affiliate, The American Farm Bureau Federation, are backing legislation recently introduced by Congressmen Beverly Byron (D - Md.) to reform the government agency's conduct. H.R. 1722 would make more farmers eligible for reimbursement of attorney's fees if a Legal Services lawsuit is determined to be frivolous by changing the qualification from "for the sole purpose of harassment" to the "principal" purpose.

H.R. 1723 would require a plaintiff to exhaust all available administrative remedies and attempt to arbitrate a grievance before filing a lawsuit.

"We believe the concepts put forth by Congresswoman Byron will be effective in helping to resolve disputes between workers and growers in a more timely and fair fashion," Eckel said.



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MAURY	SMOOTH	MEDIUM	EXCELLENT
PENNRAD	SMOOTH	MEDIUM	GOOD
POST	BEARDED	MED. LATE	VERY GOOD
SUSSEX	SMOOTH	MED. EARLY	VERY GOOD
WYSOR	SMOOTH	MED. EARLY	EXCELLENT

WHEAT

VARIETY	HEAD TYPE	RELATIVE MATURITY	RELATIVE STRAW STRENGTH
HART	BEARDED	MED. EARLY	VERY GOOD
TITAN	SMOOTH	LATE	VERY GOOD
TYLER	SMOOTH	MED. LATE	VERY GOOD
SALUDA	SMOOTH	MEDIUM	VERY GOOD
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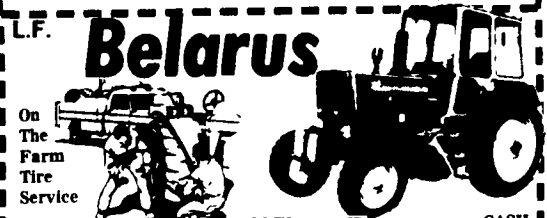
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