

# Blizzard Paralyzes State

(Continued from Page A1)

probably have to absorb several days of losses.

The intensity of the storm made the record books.

Paralyzing the East Coast, from Florida to Maine, one foot to three or more feet of snow fell throughout the East, especially the Northeast, March 13 and March 14, followed by a short-lived, arctic-like cold front that had most of Pennsylvania's schools closed at least two days this week, with delayed opening on Wednesday, while rain fell for most of the day, flooding small streams and low lying areas.

Television and radio weathermen repeatedly referred to the storm as a "hurricane with snow."

Many churches didn't have congregations on Sunday. Most businesses were closed through Monday. Many roads and parking lots weren't plowed until Monday or Tuesday, two to three days after the majority of the snow fell.

High winds, single digit and sub-zero temperatures locked up the countryside Sunday, thwarting efforts to open up highways.

Across the state, because of high winds and the fine, non-sticky snow, within a short time of plowing open a drifted section of highway, many quickly closed up again.

Because of the repeated plowings of main traffic arteries, road crews were backlogged in efforts to keep secondary highways and

non-essential roads clear for travel.

On Sunday, the governor had declared a state of emergency and traffic was prohibited to those motorists with vehicles outfitted with snow tires and chains.

Some emergency and rescue agencies and institutions had made public requests for help from owners of snowmobiles and four-wheel-drive vehicles, in case an emergency call required travel to inaccessible area.

Most all state offices were closed Monday, as were most businesses.

On Tuesday, Donald Unangst, director of the state office of the USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, said he had just started receiving reports from the field offices which were just getting back open.

"I've talked to people this morning. One of the biggest problems is, of course, dairy farmers getting milk out, getting the roads open to get the tankers in there.

"That's mainly what I heard today. Apparently there has also been some electric out."

In an unrelated matter, Unangst said that Potter County has requested disaster relief because last year's crop was severely damaged.

Unangst said that he heard of damages from winds and snow that caused some barn roofs to collapse and portions blown off, trees being

blown down, and electricity being out.

Unangst said that disaster relief will probably not be afforded dairy producers or those others.

"Right now, the only thing (producers might be) able to get would be low interest loans through Farmers Home Administration," Unangst said.

"Unless it's a special disaster which has created some of that, but then usually (the relief) is something related to low interest loans. I don't anticipate that now. It was mostly blocked roadways. But most of those things can be taken care of with insurance.

However, the longer term ramifications for dairy farmers, include cows not getting bred and field work being delayed because of excessive soil moisture.

At Atlantic Breeders Cooperative headquarters in Lancaster, N. Alan Bair, director of member and public relations, said Wednesday that while losses to the members of the cooperative are not yet known, a number of cows didn't get artificially inseminated because of block roads and technicians being unable to get to the farms.

"We made sure the bulls (at the Lancaster stud) were cared for. The way it really affects us, the members obviously, is calls for service were way down because farmers were busy trying to open lanes and removing snow. And many times when we did get a call, we couldn't get to the farm."

Bair said the cost to the cooperative is secondary to the member farmers' losses.

However, he said that by Wednesday, with roads opened up, and warming temperatures, that business was almost back to normal.

"It's been picking up everyday," he said. "As of Wednesday, we're providing service to 100 percent (of members who requested) or close to it.

"Again, the technician not getting in (to the farm), is secondary to dumping milk. We had a lot of farmers tell us about the number of days of milk dumped because the milk trucks couldn't get in," Bair said.

According to Bair, the cooperative service area covers almost the entire state, and there were no areas that didn't suffer because of the snowfall.

At Lancaster, he said two office workers worked Saturday and Sunday in place of the normal three to four shifts. He said barn workers also found their way into work, and some even stayed overnight.

"It was simply loss of business due to natural disaster. One of those things that happens occasionally. But in this case it hit everyone. The impact, therefore, is that much greater," he said.

Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative Association Inc., headquartered in Syracuse, N.Y.,

also reported some milk dumping.

They also had to reschedule an annual meeting that had been set for Tuesday at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, the first time it had scheduled a meeting there. The meeting is to be held tomorrow at the same place.

Patsy Harrington, a dispatcher for Eastern Milk, said Wednesday, "We've had a lot of producers dump milk and we don't have a handle on things yet. And we've had several high count (sub Grade A) loads" that were sold at lower prices.

Harrington said business was running smoother by late Wednesday, with the haulers able to reach the majority of producers. However, she said, "Some producers out there, with the wind (drifting roads shut), we can't get to them."

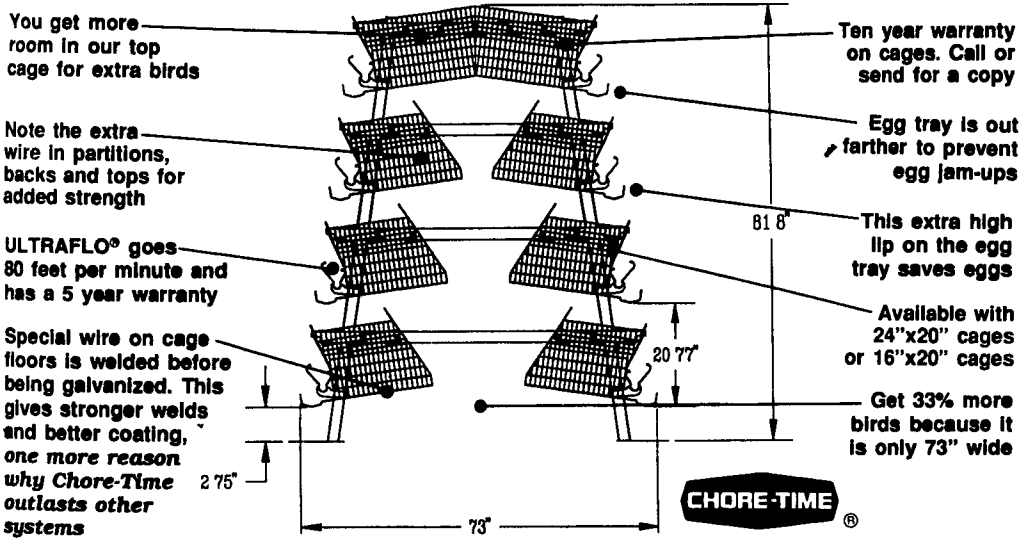
At Atlantic Dairy Cooperative, based in Southampton, Laura England, spokesperson, said, "ADC did have some pickups that weren't made because of the snow. But we don't know how much. We asking producers to tell (ADC) field representatives how much (milk) didn't go, but that data isn't compiled yet."

ADC had suffered some loss of income earlier this year when workers at Beatrice Cheese Plant had gone on strike and ADC was forced to divert milk normally sold to Beatrice.

(Turn to Page A18)

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