

Task Force To Fight Late Blight

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)—A special task force has been formed to help Pennsylvania's potato and tomato farmers minimize late blight damage to their 1995 crops, Acting Agriculture Secretary Charles C. Brosius said.

"The Department has joined forces with The Pennsylvania State University to combat late blight disease, which is a threat to commercial growers," Brosius said. "We also will work together with the farming community and federal regulators to try to minimize crop losses."

Late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*) is a fungal disease affecting tomatoes and potatoes. Brownish to purplish-black spots appear on leaves or stems of plants. The disease can occur at any time during the growing season when humid, rainy conditions occur.

Under favorable conditions, the

disease develops rapidly. If late blight occurs on potato or tomato plants, spores of the blight fungus can move quickly from field to field.

The Pennsylvania Late Blight Task Force met to recommend a variety of ways late blight disease could be detected and controlled. As a result of the first meeting, testing arrangements were developed, education and training efforts were detailed, and a request was made to the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a crisis exemption to release the fungicides Dimethomorph and Cymoxanil (Curzate) to control late blight disease.

After hearing recommendations from the task force, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture agreed to provide staffing, equipment, and telephone support for a 1995 effort to minimize the impact of late blight in Pennsylvania.

Growers should take several measures to protect their crops against late blight disease. They should select seed potatoes that meet or exceed USDA standards for late blight. They also should scout through their crops a minimum of two times per week soon after crop emergence and utilize the Department of Agriculture's

Integrated Pest Management hotline (1-800-PENN-IPM) by mid-April for occurrence information and management tips. They should apply fungicides as environmental conditions (blightcast) warrant. Cull piles or potatoes that were not dug up last year should be killed with the proper herbi-

cides or buried under.

Commercial growers potentially affected by late blight may receive further information about the management program by contacting their professional associations, county extension agents, and/or specialists at The Pennsylvania State University.

Pennsylvania's commercial potato crop was valued at \$29.5 million in 1994. The 1994 commercial tomato crop was valued at \$16.5 million, ninth in the nation.

Public Auction Register

Closing Date Monday 5:00 P.M.
of each week's publication

MAY

SAT. MAY 20 - 10AM
Wyndham Storage Center,
Lititz, Rt. 501, just N. of
Lititz. Butchering &
Restaurant Equip. Beth-
lehem Butchershop, Inc.,
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SAT. MAY 20 - 11AM Farm
machinery, real estate.
Walton, NY. Dale Lam-
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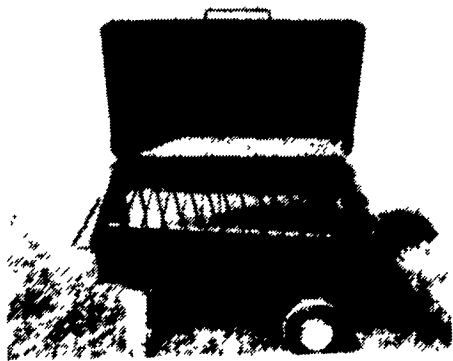
SAT. MAY 20 - 9:45AM
Repossession Sale.
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lease vehicles, Keystone

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WED. MAY 24 - 1:30PM
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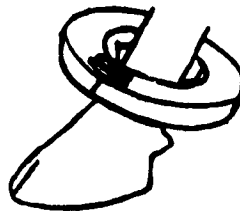
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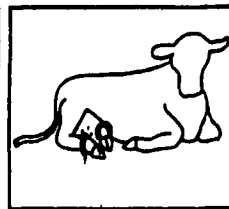
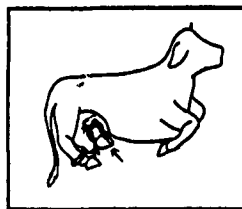
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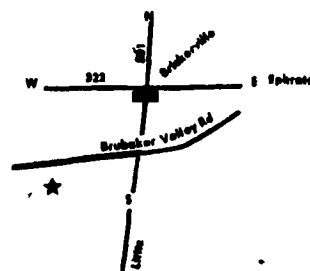
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