

USDA Announces New Conservation Program

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Eligible Pennsylvania farmers can now apply for funding to correct local natural resource problems in 20 selected watersheds, said Janet Oertly, state conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The USDA NRCS office in Pennsylvania received \$3.4 million to administer to fund projects through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), newly authorized in the 1996 Farm Bill.

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial assistance of up to 75 percent of the cost to install or apply certain conservation practices.

Some of the conservation practices include grassed waterways, filter strips and manure storage structures.

Incentive payments can be made to encourage producers to manage certain resources such as manure and nutrients. The program is limited to agricultural and livestock producers.

Eligible land includes cropland, forestland, and pasture.

"This program will help producers address some of the most critical natural resource concerns, such as soil erosion, water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, and wetlands," Oertly said. "More productive croplands, cleaner water, and better wildlife will benefit all Pennsylvania residents."

This fiscal year, 65 percent of

the cost-share funds are to be targeted toward local resource issues in the 20 selected watersheds, while 35 percent is to be targeted for two statewide resource concerns — crop production and livestock and poultry production, according to Oertly.

Producers can apply for assistance until July 11 at any local office of the NRCS, as well as any office of the USDA Farm Service Agency, or local state Conservation District.

The application periods for cost-share funding for projects within the specific watersheds are to be announced locally. Contact a local office of the NRCS, FSA or Conservation District to find out the application times.

As background, local groups made up of representatives of federal, state and local agencies and interested natural resource organizations submitted suggested areas for consideration for funding.

The 20 watersheds (considered "geographic areas"), and the statewide resources concerns were then selected by Oertly in conjunction with the State Technical Committee and state office of the USDA FSA.

These selected areas have significant soil, water, or related natural resource concerns, according to Oertly.

Since most of the funding will be distributed to fund projects in the targeted geographic priority areas, producers within these areas have a better chance of receiving

funding, Oertly said.

A conservation plan is required for all EQIP contracts, which run from five to 10 years.

NRCS and county conservation district staffs are to provide the technical and educational assistance producers need to apply or install conservation practices based on their conservation plan, Oertly said. The plan is to describe conservation and management practices to protect soil, water, air and/or related natural resources.

EQIP is USDA's largest conservation program designed to con-

serve and improve land while it remains in agricultural production. It replaced older and some other conservation incentive programs, and has an annual budget of \$200 million through 2002.

A list of the specific watersheds targeted for priority funding, and the respective allocation of \$2,240,000 to be spent in the watershed during 1997, includes Pequea-Mill-Octorara at \$151,000; Neshaminy, \$76,500; Tulpehocken, \$141,500; Little Swatara, \$121,500; Maiden, \$121,500; Pigeon-Pike, \$76,500;

Shenango, \$151,500; Middle Youghingheny, \$81,500; Sugar, \$136,500; Crooked-Cowanshannock, \$136,500; Clarion, \$101,500; Lake Erie, \$151,500; Evitts, \$36,500; Codorus, \$121,500; Jordan, \$76,500; Chickies, \$126,500; Conodoguinet, \$116,500; Muncy-Chillisquaque, \$116,500; Shamokin-Mahanoy, \$76,500; Cowanesque-Genesee, \$121,500.

The rest of the funds to be used to address issues of statewide concern is \$1,204,000.

F.O. 4 May Milk \$13.25

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Middle Atlantic Order Market Administrator Rex F. Lothrop announced a May 1997 weighted average milk price of \$13.25.

The weighted average differential price was \$2.65 per hundredweight and the producer nonfat milk solids price was 82 cents per pound. The weighted average price was down 31 cents from April and was 80 cents lower than a year earlier.

The producer NFMS price was

down 36 cents from last May. The nonfat milk solids price, applicable to handler payments, was \$8.259 per pound for the month, down 36.20 cents from last year.

The gross value of May producer milk, adjusted to 3.5 percent butterfat was \$82.5 million, compared to \$71.7 million a year ago.

Mr. Lothrop said that producer receipts totaled 625.2 million pounds during May, an increase of 112.5 million pounds from last May and the average daily deliv-

ery of 3,724 pounds per producer increased 174 pounds or 4.9 percent from a year earlier.

A total of 5,416 producers supplied Order 4 handlers during the month, an increase of 757 from a year ago. Class I producer milk totaled 260.7 million pounds and was up 40.8 million pounds, or 18.5 percent from last May.

Class I milk accounted for 41.71 percent of total producer milk receipts during the month, compared with 42.90 percent in May 1996.

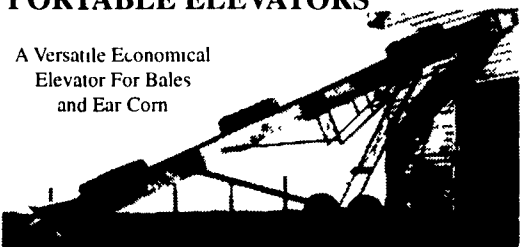
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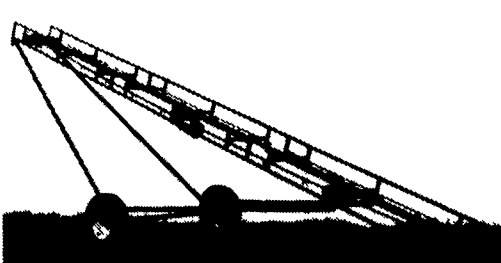
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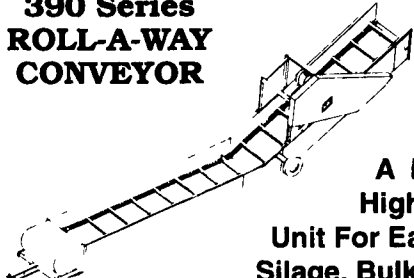


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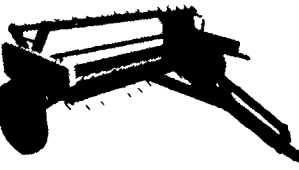


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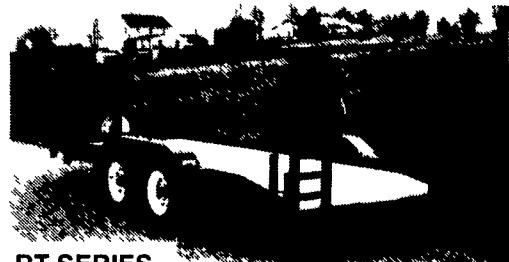
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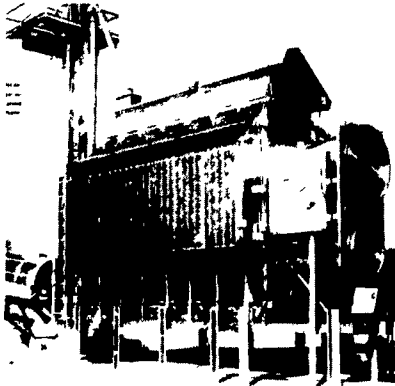
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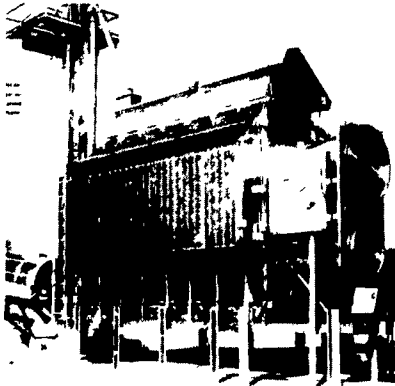


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