

◆ PRESIDENT'S CORNER ◆

(Continued from Page 1)

But as a grazing farm we are better able to handle a drought with a little foresight and a plan. For us that plan includes, first, making additional hay for a 60-day feeding program. We use net-wrapped round bales stored in a paddock along a wooded fence row that protects the bales from the afternoon sun. If not needed it is the first hay fed in November.

Second, we do not graze our paddocks short — we leave an extra inch or so from normal. This results in a one-day paddock only providing a half day of grazing. Therefore we use up our permanent paddocks quicker. The hay fields are used for the usual August slump in pasture growth. We are about two grazings behind a normal year.

Third, our orchard/grass/alfalfa mixed hay/pasture fields held up for an extra cutting or grazing than did the bluegrass, or orchard grass, or white clover paddocks. In a cool, wet year, all of the above would provide excellent grazing forage.

Fourth, we use our New Holland haybine to clip all pastures that have old over-mature alfalfa or dead-top orchardgrass at about 4 inches in height. With the first good rain, we can get 3 inches to 4 inches of new growth on our orchardgrass. As I write this, Aug. 20, this is what happened on our farm as a result of a 4-inch rain Friday, Aug. 13.

Fifth, in order to conserve feed and prevent overgrazing, we weaned our calves Aug. 1, one month early. Calves were put on good hay and the dry cows were put on old grass on waterways and diversion. They are now being fed round bale hay that

was stored outside the past two months. The stocker cattle continue to thrive on green pasture.

For those producers that need to buy hay or have hay to sell, contact HayNet — a service of Penn State Cooperative Extension. You can view the list on the Internet or by visiting any office of Penn State Cooperative Extension or USDA Farm Service Agency.

I recently received a letter from the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA). RMA has been charged by congress to continue development of the farm safety net throughout the expansion of the current crop insurance program. Forage is one of the largest segments of agriculture that does not have a successful, producer-accepted crop insurance program.

Do you have any ideas that would improve the program already in place? Should an entirely different

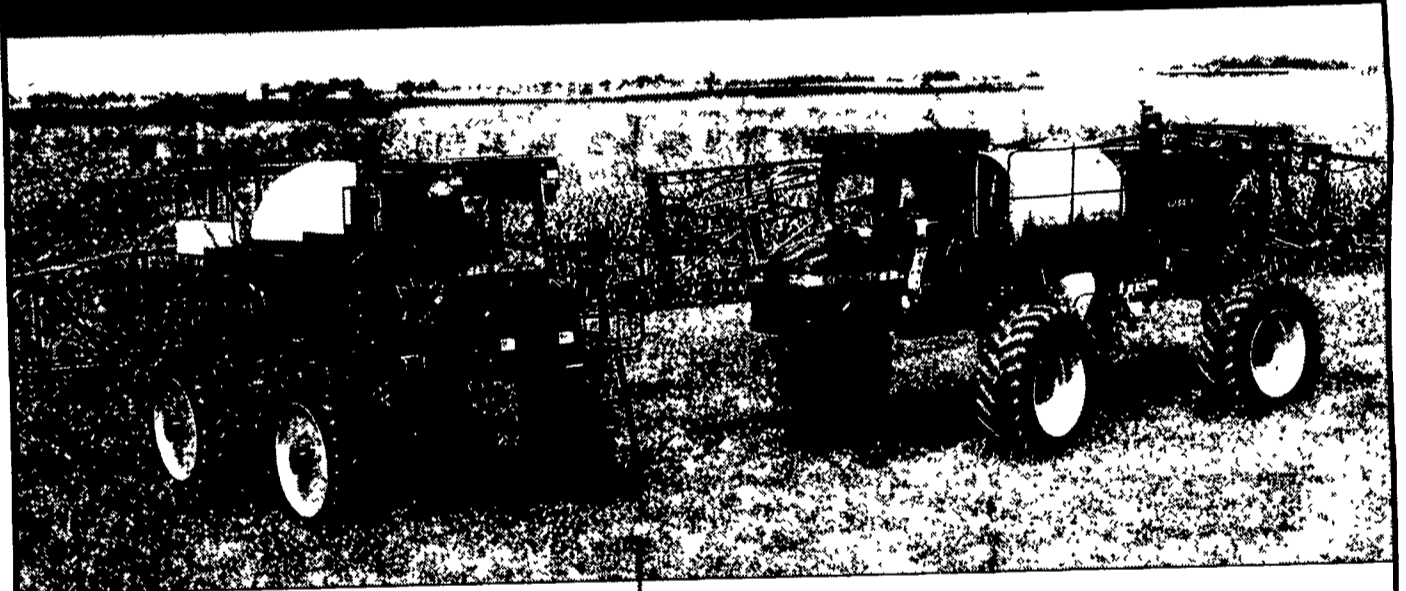
concept be developed? What type of insurance program for forage crops should be developed? If you would be interested in attending a meeting to help RMA develop a producer-accepted crop insurance program, call or write me, giving your name, address, and telephone number. If you have an idea of how to fix the existing program, contact USDA-RMA, 4407 Bland Road, Suite 150,

Raleigh, NC 27609.

Attention graziers. If you are a grazier who plants annual forage crops, you may be interested in trying a bag of Abundant, a tetraploid annual ryegrass. If more than one grazier is interested, a drawing will be held at the spring grazing conference in Grantville. Call or write me, giving your name, address and telephone number.



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