Some View Past Year As One Of Opportunity; For Others, It Was 1999 Nightmare

(Continued from Page A1)

cane named Floyd in September.

Drought Of '99

By far the biggest story was the worst drought in the history of the state, rivaling that of 1964 or 1955.

In mid-June, Gov. Tom Ridge declared a "drought warning" for more than two-thirds of the state. The warning, second of a threetiered drought response, called for a 10 percent voluntary reduction in water consumption.

When producers thought the worst was over, and some small regions in the northcentral and northwestern part of the state received rain, others saw corn and soybeans emerge, wither, and die.

The July 24 Lancaster Farming reported that a "drought emergency" had been declared. The third and most severe stage mandates restrictions on water use.

The drought was how producers paid the price for little snow over the winter, little rain the spring, and a dry, hot summer. This resulted in dangerous low groundwater levels. Some producers, dependent on irrigation, had to turn of the pumps to conserve water for livestock. Shallow wells dried up.

Pastures dried up, too. By late August, truckloads of hay from Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Ontario made their way to the drought-stricken states in the Northeast. FFA chapters and other organizations donated their time to help unload hay. The Mennonite Disaster Service initiated a hay

drive late in August after some farmers in Michigan offered their bumper crop of hay to needy farmers in the East.

Even as late as December, com was arriving from Canada to area producers. Silage harvest yields were way down. Many farmers simply disced their corn grain fields. As a result, volunteer corn - on ears too small to be picked up by the combine — will pose a risk in some fields in 2000.

In 1999, the state Department of Environmental Protection was cautioning everyone statewide to do their part to conserve water. Some townships declared mandatory restrictions - including water rationing.

In Lancaster County, three consecutive 100-degree days were recorded, with more than half dozen days total. For many counties in the southeastern part of the state, there was no rain in the crucial months of June and July -when corn and soybeans need it most.

As a result, in carly August, President Clinton declared West Virginia and four contiguous counties in southwestern Pennsylvania a federal disaster area.

Prior to recessing, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed a \$65.6 million drought relief bill for producers. Earlier on, many producer organizations were disquieted about a proposed lowinterest loan program to aid in the drought relief; but at the requests of senators and representatives, who realized producers do not

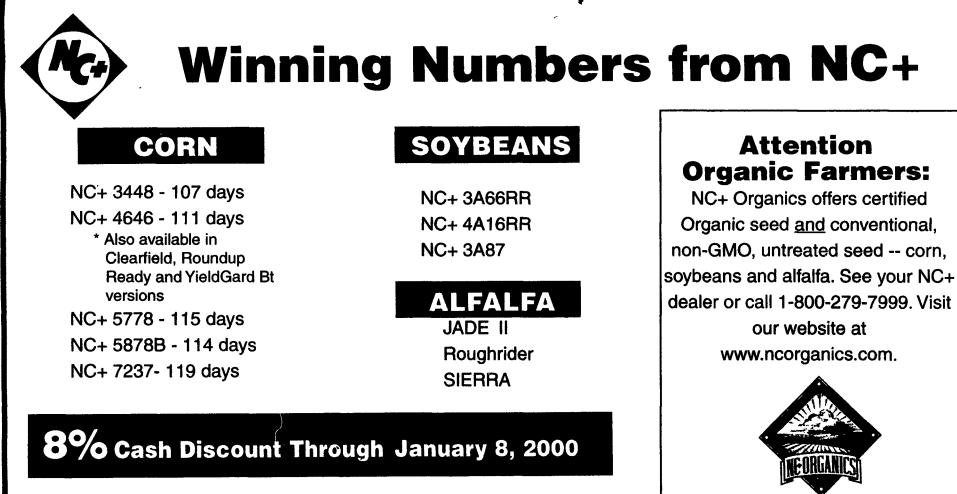
need to carry on additional debt, the relief bill carmarks \$60 million in grants to help farmers recoup 1999 crop losses and \$5.6 million in crop insurance incentives for this year. The state money com-

bines with an estimated \$75 million in federal aid, bringing the total for drought relief in Pennsylvania to \$135 million.

The aid program is available to farmers who can document a crop

loss of more than 35 percent. Deadline to apply is Feb. 25. Farmers who want aid must apply in person at the county branches of the USDA Farm Service Agency. (Turn to Page A28)

Pennsylvania Produce is Simply Delicious. To educate the public about fruit and vegetable production in the state, a campaign has been cooordinated through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture with the state food merchants and individual retailers and marketers. From left, Food Merchants President David McCorkle, Weis Markets President Norman Rich, State Agriculture Secretary Samuel Hayes Jr., potato producer Keith Masser, and green bean grower Ronald Copenhaver.



Call District Sales Manager Harvey Doyle at 724-459-8580 or see one of these NC+ Dealers.

ALEXANDRIA J CLETUS RHODES • 814-669-4705

CANTON

ED PEPPER • 717-364-5242

EAST EARL IVAN ZIMMERMAN • 717-354-5826

ELLIOTSBURG WAYNE FREEMAN • 717-582-2397

HALIFAX

BECHTEL FARMS, KENNETH BECHTEL •717-896-8314

KINTNERSVILLE

WAYNE LITZENBERGER • 610-847-5563

KUNKLETOWN JEFFREY BORGER • 610-381-3785

LEBANON CLARENCE MULL • 717-865-2037

LEWISBURG

AARON MARTIN • 717-524-2952

LEWISBURG

URIE YODER • 717-524-7739

LITITZ ELVIN HURSH • 717-733-3538 MANCHESTER ANIMAL MEDIC • 717-266-5611

MANHEIM

ARTHUR AUKER • 717-665-6627

MOUNT JOY VINCENT MUMMAU • 717-653-5991

RICHFIELD SAMUEL KNOUSE • 717-463-2885

SALEM

DONALD EMEL • 609-769-1577

THOMPSONTOWN ROGER SANER • 717-535-5307

WOODBURY GREGG CARBAUGH • 814-766-3696

WYALLISING ANDY CAMPBELL • 717-363-2133



America's down to earth seed company