PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

President's Message

Dan Wolf
President, PMCGA

WINTER'S FINALLY HERE

After a milder-than-normal start, winter seems to have finally arrived.

Perhaps it takes a blast of Canadian air that parks daytime highs in the twenties to turn one's focus away from outdoor projects. Couple that with a positive trend change in a lackluster grain market and we could be persuaded to think about planning another growing season.

In view of the difficulties we encounter with weather and markets, sometimes it helps to take advantage of opportunities to broaden our horizons.

Two events are scheduled for next month that could be very beneficial. On Feb. 1, the Lehigh Valley Grain Marketing Club is sponsoring "Decisions 2000" at the Days Inn and Convention Center in Allentown.

This is a chance to hear two knowledgeable and highly respected agricultural experts. Richard Brock, of Brock Associates, is a marketing adviser who will discuss world and U.S. financial trends as well as the outlook for grain and livestock prices.

On the program as well is Lou Moore, Penn State professor of ag economics and a seasoned observer of farm trends and technology changes.

Call (610) 391-9840 for registration information.

The Pennsylvania Corn and Soybean Conference will be Feb. 8 at the Radisson Penn Harris Hotel and Convention Center in Camp Hill. Among the topics being discussed are crop insurance reforms, the GMO controversy, new soybean uses, GPS equipment, and ag perspectives for 2000. The keynote address will be presented by Dennis Avery, an internationally known analyst, noted for his study of trends in food demand, agricultural productivity, and global farm competition. Call (814) 865-2543 for more information.

Hope to see you at one or both of these educational events.

NCGA Welcomes EPA Biotech Decision

ST. LOUIS, Mo.–The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) announcement on Jan. 14 concerning Bt hybrids adds credibility to the recommendations made last April by the National Corn Growers Association and seed industry representatives.

In the spring of 1999, NCGA helped organize the Agricultural Biotechnology Stewardship Working group that included biotechnology providers. This working group provided the EPA an industry insect resistance management (IRM) plan that would manage the Bt technology to avoid possible insect resistance.

Key among the points was a requirement to plan a 20 percent refuge of non-Bt corn in the Corn Belt and up to a 50 percent refuge of non-Bt corn in the Cotton Belt. The refuge ensures a population of European corn borer moths that are suspectible to Bt.

"NCGA strongly supports the planting of IRM refuges because they allow the maximum use of this pest control technology while maintaining its long-term effectiveness," said Fred Yoder, Plain City, Ohio, farmer and a member of NCGA's Corn Board. "We welcome EPA's statement because it generally follows the plan we submitted. The EPA's announcement actually validates those recommendations."

For more information about the NCGA's IRM education plan, visit the NCGA web site at www.ncga.com

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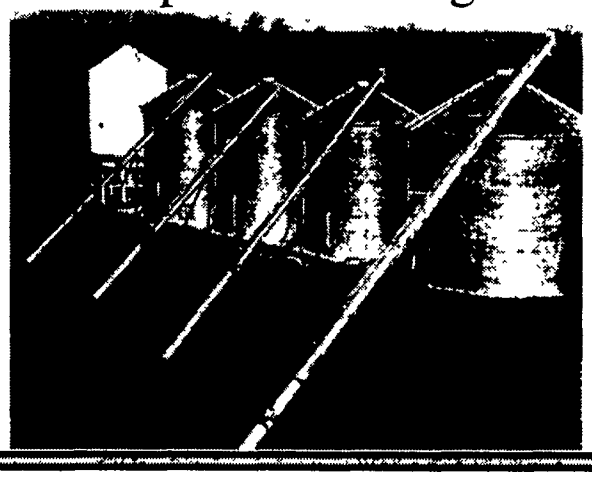

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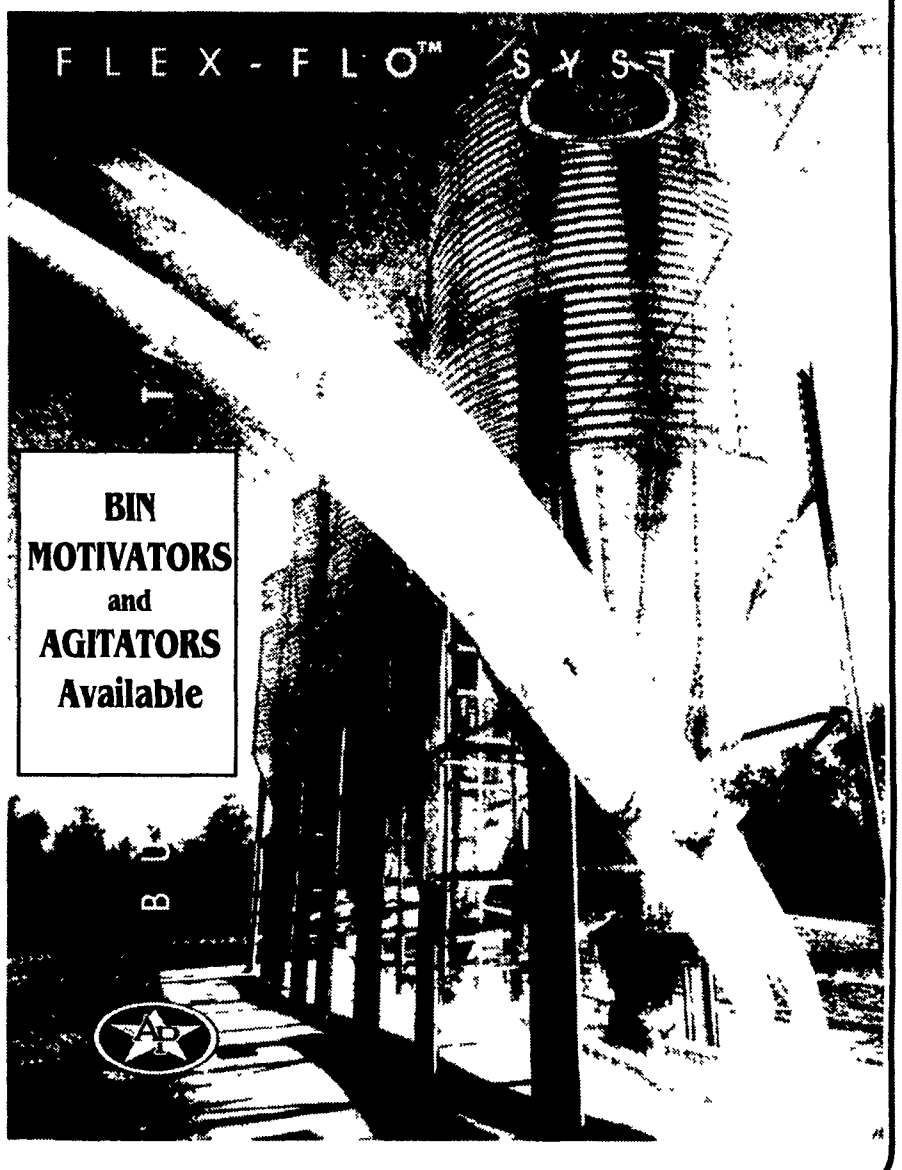
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