

PDA Offers Crop Insurance Assistance To Farmers

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to the \$60 million the state will use to provide disaster relief to farmers suffering from the 1999 drought.

The reason the state has allocated the money for crop insurance is because the federal crop disaster program requires farmers who did not have crop insurance in 1999 to purchase crop insurance for 2000 and 2001 before receiving federal drought assistance.

"There are two reasons for the crop insurance assistance program," said Russell Redding, deputy secretary of market development for PDA. "The first is to assist those who have had crop losses to meet federal guidelines. The second is to encourage participation in crop in-

surance to mitigate future crop losses."

Anyone who is eligible for crop loss payments is also eligible to receive assistance in purchasing crop insurance. The crop insurance assistance payment will cover up to 10 percent of the cost of the gross premium for crop insurance, plus the total amount of related fees.

If there are not sufficient funds available to provide 10 percent of the insurance premiums for all farmers who apply, the department will prorate the available funds among the eligible producers. Farmers must apply for federal crop disaster assistance before being eligible to receive the crop insurance assistance.

"The most important thing is

just encouraging farmers to get in and sign up," said Redding. "As of Monday, we processed 544 applications for crop loss payment. But there are a lot more applications in the pipeline. And it's only a fraction of those who are eligible to apply."

To receive both the crop disaster relief and crop insurance assistance, farmers must apply at their county farm service agency office in person.

The deadline to apply for the federal crop disaster assistance is **February 25, 2000**. The insurance assistance remains available to farmers until the 2000 crop year sign-up closes, which is **March 15** for most crops.

Farmers can complete the federal disaster relief applica-

tion and the one-page crop insurance assistance application in one visit to the farm service office.

"It's important to note that, while applications for assistance are satisfied at the farm service agency, the farmers still need to contact their crop insurance

agent to get the crop insurance," said Redding.

The phone number for the county farm service agency can be found in the blue pages of the local phone book. Phone numbers for the county offices are also listed on the department's website, www.pda.state.pa.us.

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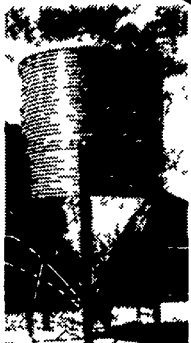
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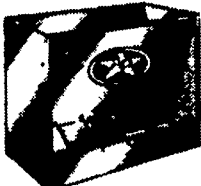
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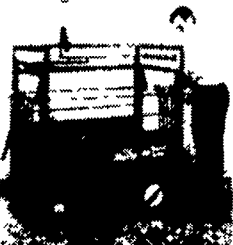


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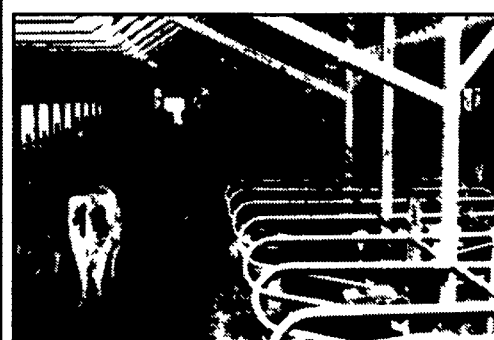


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