

# Hayes Issues Treatment Orders For Plum Pox Orchards

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)—Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Samuel E. Hayes Jr. issued "treatment orders" for plum pox infected orchards in Adams County.

"In an attempt to protect the stone fruit growers and the related fruit industries of Adams County and Pennsylvania," said Hayes, "I am asking that the orchards infected with plum pox virus be destroyed. While the destruction of orchards is an unpleasant task, it is what is necessary from a biosecurity standpoint."

There is no alternative to destruction, Hayes said.

The "treatment orders" require that the infected orchards are to be removed by April 1. There are approximately 218 acres of infected trees.

Infected growers and nurserymen are eligible for eradication

payments up to \$1,000 per acre through an appropriation made by the General Assembly and signed by Gov. Ridge.

"The infected growers and nurserymen have shown great courage in the face of this devastating disease. They have also displayed admirable citizenship in their determination to protect other members of the stone fruit industry who are not known to be infected by the plum pox virus," said Hayes.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has conducted ongoing meetings with Adams County fruit growers since September 1999, which has resulted in an "action plan" to fight the plum pox virus (PPV).

"As part of our continuing efforts to contain the newly-discovered plum pox virus, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture will test all orchards

in the quarantine area two times during this year's growing season and all other stone fruit orchards across Pennsylvania at least one time this year," Hayes said.

Residential trees in the affected areas will also be tested for PPV.

Plum pox virus is a debilitating affliction that causes the stone fruit trees to have a severe drop-off in production. However, plum pox virus has absolutely no effect upon humans. Fruit from trees infected with the virus can be eaten by humans without any consequence.

PPV affects stone-bearing fruits, including plums, peaches, nectarines, and apricots. It is characterized by round spots (pox) on fruit, leaves, stems, and seeds. It does not kill trees, but makes fruit unmarketable and

drastically decreases yields. PPV is transmitted from infected trees by aphids or by grafting. The strain detected in Pennsylvania is not transmitted in the fruit's seed.

First described in East Europe in 1910, PPV has spread to most countries on the European continent and to at least one country in South America. This is the first time PPV has been detected in North America.

Pennsylvania is a leading producer of fruit, ranking fourth nationally in peaches. Adams County is Pennsylvania's leading fruit-producing county.

In 1999, the value of Pennsylvania's stone fruit production was approximately \$25 million. Adams County accounted for \$10 million of the total.

USDA APHIS is working collaboratively with Pennsylvania because the PPV is a threat to the USA's fruit industry.

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## Pork

(Continued from Page A34)

Both the National Farmers Union, who met in February at the 98th anniversary convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, and National Farmers Organization, commended Glickman on his announcement.

"We have for many years strongly urged the secretary to allow producers to vote on the pork checkoff program," said NFU President Leland Swenson. "The checkoff programs must be more accountable to the producers who fund them."

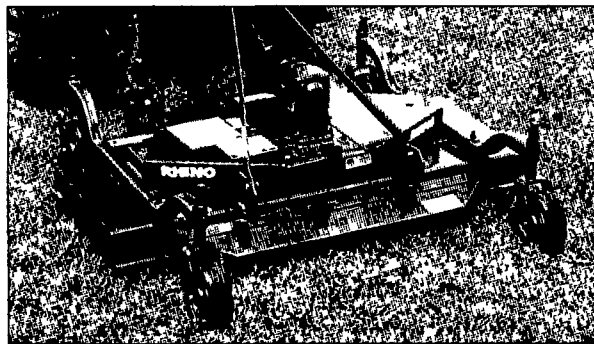
"Certainly all mandates should be reviewed periodically to determine their effectiveness based upon a changing agricultural landscape," said National Farmers Organization (NFO) President Paul Olson. Last year the NFO members took the position that a referendum should be conducted every five years to determine the program's future.

NFO members requested that Glickman set a date to allow pork and beef producers to vote on the viability of checkoffs.

That date has yet to be determined.

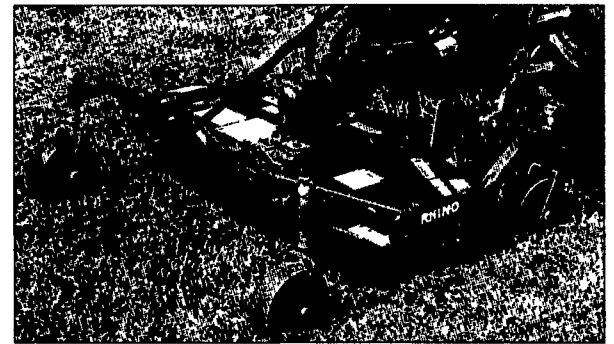
Meanwhile, the American Farm Bureau continues to support checkoff programs. David Winkles, a producer from Sumter, S.C. and president of the South Carolina Farm Bureau, said the efforts of the commodity promotion programs "have increased production and processing efficiencies, help build demand, and expand both domestic and foreign consumption."

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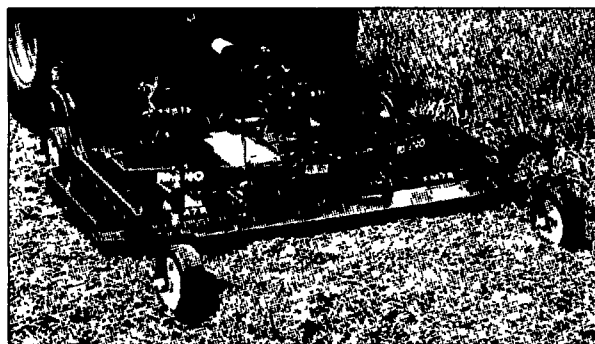
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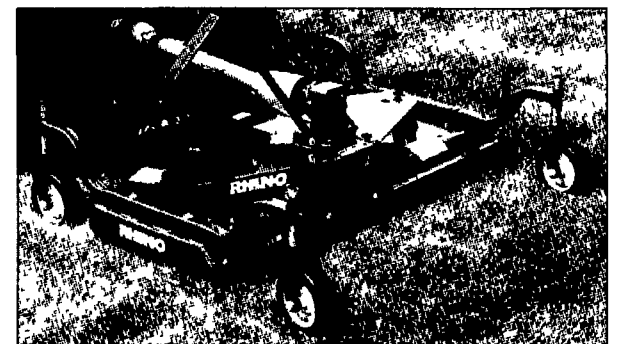
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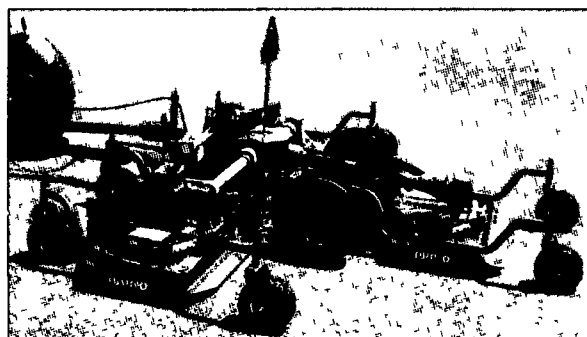
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