

Final Payments Conclude Disaster Relief Program

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Dauphin, and Schuylkill counties has received a total of almost \$13 million in drought assistance.

The final crop loss payments, which have been sent out in recent weeks, reflect the remaining balance of the \$60 million portion of the 1999 disaster-relief package. Other segments of the program, the \$5 million Hay Rebate Assistance Program, and the \$5.6 million Crop Insurance Assistance Program, brought the overall drought-assistance package to \$70.6 million.

Under this plan, the \$5.6 million designated for crop insurance assistance will be administered directly through


insurance underwriters and the federal Risk Management Agency, which will make the program easier for subscribers to use. The state Department of Agriculture has arranged to have farmers' crop insurance billing statements reflect the state's 10 percent premium and fees assistance. This will eliminate the need for farmers to wait for reimbursement after paying for their crop loss insurance.

"The Commonwealth's efforts in making these funds available quickly, highlighted the Administration's responsiveness to Pennsylvania's agricultural community. It has helped farmers to protect their viability and their capacity to produce food and fiber," Hayes said.



During the Lebanon Fair this week Hayes presented a symbolic check to representatives of the area producers and representatives of the agriculture industry. Jeffrey Werner, president of the farm bureau, accepted the more than \$1 million check, made out to Lebanon county farmers for hay and crop loss and crop insurance assistance.

"I cannot have a complete year if I can't spend a bit of time here at the Lebanon Fair," said Agriculture Secretary Samuel Hayes. "It's one of the great agricultural extravaganzas of the year in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania." Photo by Michelle Ranck

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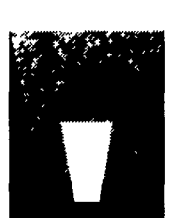
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