

# Ag Department Announces Statewide Plum Pox Survey

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) - Agriculture Secretary Sam Hayes announced statewide surveys Tuesday this week for the plum pox virus.

Officials are in the field working with landowners to verify problem fields, to identify susceptible trees, and to begin sampling and testing of the trees. The statewide survey is necessary to detect any plum pox virus-infected trees.

"We need the help of everyone in the quarantine zone — backyard fruit growers, homeowners, renters, businesses and commercial growers — to help eradicate this fruit tree disease so that the huge economic losses being experienced by the fruit industry are not in vain," Hayes said.

Plum pox virus poses absolutely no threat to the consumer. The fruit from infected trees can be eaten fresh or as processed fruit. Plum pox virus is, however, an extremely serious threat to the peach, nectarine, apricot and plum industry of Pennsylvania because it drastically reduces a tree's ability to produce fruit. It is our goal at the Department of Agriculture to help lead the fight to eradicate this virus. The planting of virus-susceptible trees and shrubs anywhere in the quarantine area would make additional host material available for virus infection and jeopardize the opportunity to eradicate the virus."

Plum pox virus causes a disease in

stone fruit, such as peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots and related ornamental trees in the genus Prunus, including purple leaf plum, sand cherry, flowering almond and flowering peach. These varieties and hybrids are hosts of the virus strain in Pennsylvania. Plum pox virus is a viral disease, also known as sharka, and is a limiting factor for stone fruit production in areas of the world where it occurs. Aphids spread the virus from infected to healthy trees.

Homeowners living within the quarantine area also will be contacted for verification of susceptible trees, which will be tested for the virus. If the trees are infected, they must be eradicated.

Hayes also reminds residents and business owners of restrictions on planting plum pox virus-susceptible trees or shrubs in the virus quarantine zones in Adams and Cumberland counties.

Restrictions cover all of Dickinson Township, South Middleton Township, and Mount Holly Springs in Cumberland County.

In Adams County, the areas affected are Huntington Township, Latimore Township, York Springs, the northern portion of Tyrone Township, and the eastern portion of Menallen Township.

The restrictions on planting strengthens the quarantine and will help the Department of Agriculture conduct an efficient and effective survey focused on locating infected trees. Infection of the plum pox virus in trees can take years before detection is possible. The planting of more trees during this process complicates the survey, adds cost and increases to the number of times property owners must be contacted by surveyors, and poses an increased risk to our fruit growers.

Since the virus' discovery

in Adams County in September 1999, the state Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has conducted extensive surveys and more than 70,000 lab tests last year to establish a quarantine area.

The commonwealth has invested more than \$5.1 million to eradicate the plum pox virus and indemnify farmers.

For more information about plum pox virus, contact the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Plant Industry at (717) 772-5203.

## Hogs Wanted For Barrow Test Program At Cornell

HARFORD, N.Y. — The New York Pork Producers Cooperative, together with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell University Department of Animal Sciences, and the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine are sponsoring a Barrow Test program at the Cornell Training and Research Center in Harford, N.Y.

The Barrow Test program is an excellent opportunity for hog producers to evaluate the genetics in their breeding program. A test group from a breeder consists of three barrow from a single sire line and a single sow line.

Feed conversion efficiency, weight gains, percentage of fat, leanness, and loin eye are all evaluated. The program also offers an educational opportunity for 4-H'ers in using their skills to evaluate the results.

To be successful this, the Barrow Test program needs additional consignors. The planned starting dates are July 10 to 15 and the conclusion will be in early fall.

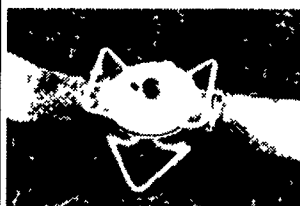
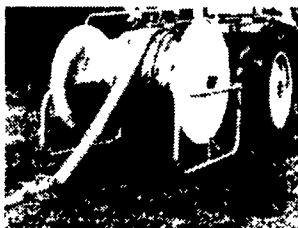
Producers interested in participating in this program should contact Wyman Drake at (716) 374-5098 or Ed Brayman at (607) 265-3769 or Dr. Tro Bui at (607) 255-4505 as soon as possible.

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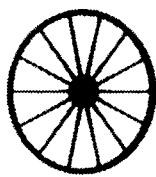
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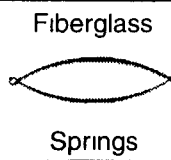


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