

Financial Aid Expected To Relieve Farmer Drought Woes

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — A lack of moisture, over an extended period of time, has caused producers in Lancaster County to suffer from the effects of severe drought conditions. Farms experiencing severe drought conditions may be eligible for cost-share assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP).

This disaster program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, which provides cost-share assistance if the damage is so severe that water available for livestock or orchards and vineyards has been reduced below normal to the extent that neither can survive without additional water.

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost share not to exceed 64 percent of the cost of installing eligible temporary measures. Cost sharing for permanent measures is based on 50 percent of the total eligible cost. Cost-share assistance is limited to \$200,000 per person natural disaster. Approved practices and measures may include:

- Installing pipelines or other facilities for livestock water or existing irrigation systems for orchards and vineyards.
- Constructing and deepening wells for livestock water.
- Developing springs or seeps for livestock water.

Producers who have experi-

enced severe drought conditions requiring outside assistance to provide supplemental emergency livestock water may contact the Lancaster County FSA Office. Request for assistance will be accepted at the Lancaster County FSA from April 15 through June 13.

Normally, to be eligible for cost share, practices shall not be started until a request has first been filed at the FSA office and an onsite inspection of the problem area has been made by the County Committee or its representative. A special extension will

be considered for those who already implemented these practices, but an approval is not guaranteed. Post implementation requests must be made by April 30.

At this time, funding has yet been received from Washington, D.C.; therefore, approvals are contingent upon the availability of this funding request.

For more information, contact the Lancaster County Farm Service Agency located at the Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Rd., Lancaster, or phone (717) 397-6235.

Forest Landowners Workshop June 28

W. PITTSTON (Luzerne Co.) — Forest landowners are invited to attend a daylong workshop entitled "Planning For Your Forest's Future: Understanding Forest Ecology," June 28.

This hands-on workshop will focus on forest ecology, developing a forest stewardship plan for your land, understanding how harvesting affects the forest, and how to find the right resource professional to help you manage your forest and plan for the future.

Dr. Jim Finley of the Penn State School of Forest Resources will be leading the workshop.

The workshop is scheduled for 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday, June 28, at Grey Towers, home of Gifford Pinchot in Milford. Space is limited to 50 participants and advance registration is required. Call the Penn State Extension office at (570) 825-1701 for more information and registration.

DEP Responds To Manure Spill Near Fulton County Stream

CRYSTAL SPRING (Fulton Co.) — DEP responded to a manure spill at Fowler Farms located here, according to DEP South-central Regional Director Michael R. Steiner.

The liquid manure flowed across the property and into springs, ending up in an unnamed tributary to Brush Creek, a stream that's designated a High Quality stream by DEP.

"We know that the 4-year-old farm had a current nutrient management plan," Steiner said. "However, poor management practices resulted in the discharge of this manure."

The farm, located on Hanks Road, raises approximately 2,000 swine. The full impact of the manure release is still being evaluated, but the cleanup contractor was brought in by DEP under provisions of state law that apply to an emergency environmental cleanup to dig trenches to intercept manure flow.

"DEP continues to work with the State Fish and Boat Commission, the Fulton County Emergency Management Agency, and the Brush Creek Township Sew-

age Enforcement Officer to assess the environmental damage and assure a proper cleanup," Steiner said.

According to Steiner, the under-the-floor storage pit is designed to hold 770,000 gallons of manure; however, the manure exceeded this capacity and flowed into the unnamed tributary.

State regulations require owners and operators of manure storage pits to keep the manure level low enough that there is not danger of overflow. The requirements are one foot for concrete structures and two feet for earthen structures. Fowler's facility is a concrete structure.

DEP inspectors issued a report to the Fowlers outlining necessary actions to take to prevent further pollution. DEP and the Fulton County Conservation District will continue to conduct follow-up inspections of the facility until the situation is rectified. Enforcement options are being evaluated.

For more information, contact Community Relations Coordinator Karen Sittler at (717) 705-4904 or e-mail ksittler@state.pa.us.

AMS Issues Final Rule On Lamb Checkoff Program

WASHINGTON, D. C. — The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has issued the

final rule establishing a national, industry-funded lamb promotion, research, and information program.

The program will

provide for an industry board to carry out promotion, research, and information programs designed to increase the demand for lamb and lamb products.

Under the program, lamb producers, seedstock producers, feeders, and exporters will pay an assessment of one-half cent (\$.005) per pound when live lambs are sold. The first handler, primarily packers, will pay an additional 30 cents per head of lambs purchased by the first handler for slaughter.

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