

Top Teacher Recognized At Kutztown Fair



KUTZTOWN (Berks Co.) — Celeste Ball, agricultural science teacher at Kutztown High School, was honored by Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff Wednesday evening for winning Disney's American Teacher Award Honoree for High School Science and Math. Ball was one of the 32 out of 180,000 applicants of the award for her outstanding work with teaching ag sciences at Kutztown High School. On hand were many state and local township officials during the presentation. This is Ball's eighth year at Kutztown, which has 130 students enrolled in ag education and about 43 at the Kutztown FFA Chapter. Wolff provided Ball with a commendation for being a "premier ag science teacher," Wolff said.

Photo by Andy Andrews, editor

Sign-Up Period Begins For USDA's Livestock Assistance Program

WASHINGTON, D. C. — Upon announcing the start of the sign-up period for the Livestock Assistance Program (LAP), Wednesday (Aug. 6), USDA Secretary Ann Veneman said: "This program will provide additional relief to livestock producers who suffered grazing losses due to drought, severe weather and related causes, and have limited safety net and risk management tools available."

This program was authorized by the Agricultural Assistance Act of 2003 (2003 Act) and \$250 million were made available to livestock producers for grazing losses that occurred in either 2001 or 2002.

When the sign-up period ends (Oct. 24, 2003), the total value of all applications will be determined and if in excess of \$250 million will be adjusted proportionately.

Under LAP, a producer's grazing land must be located in a county that was declared a primary disaster area under a Presidential or Secretarial declaration. The county must have been approved after Jan. 1, 2001, and a designation requested no later than Feb. 20, 2003, and subsequently approved. Contiguous counties are not eligible.

For those counties designated

as a disaster area for 2001 or 2002, additional LAP eligibility criteria must be met for each year. A county must have suffered at least a 40 percent grazing loss for three or more consecutive months in a calendar year in order to be eligible for that year.

A county may meet eligibility requirements for both 2001 and 2002; however, a producer in that county may receive a LAP payment for only one of the years.

LAP is a grazing loss program. However, payments are on a per head basis of eligible livestock, including beef and dairy cattle, buffalo, beefalo, sheep, goats, swine and certain equine animals. A producer must have control of adequate grazing land to support the eligible livestock.

During 2001 or 2002, a livestock producer must have suffered a 40 percent or greater loss of grazing production for three or

ters.

The 2003 Act required that an adjusted gross income (AGI) limitation apply, a change from previous LAPs. Also, LAP payments to a producer will be reduced by the amount of assistance received by that producer under previous Livestock Compensation Programs (LCP-I, LCP-II) and the 2002 Cattle Feed Program.

A producer must possess beneficial and financial interests in eligible livestock that have been owned or leased for at least three months.

A \$40,000 payment limitation also applies to LAP assistance.

USDA has developed a Web site that provides producers with one convenient location for details on new and existing disaster assistance. The Web site can be accessed at <http://disaster.usda.gov/>



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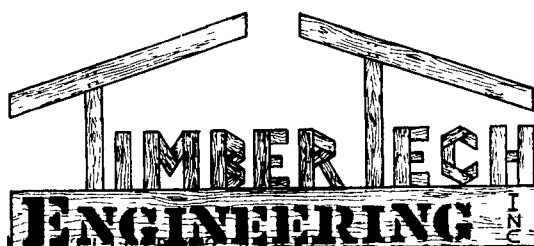
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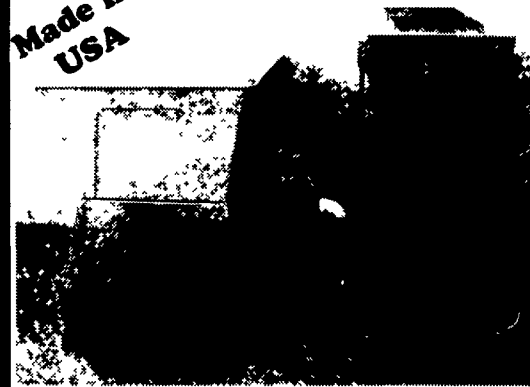
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