

Rain

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The National Weather Service recorded .2 inch of rain at the airport, while Williamsport received .66 inch.

Donna Grey, agent for the Pennsylvania State Co-Op Extension, said the drought is getting serious.

"All the farmers are hit hard (by this)," she said. Corn and hay for livestock are two significant crops that are not yielding well due to the drought. "The second crop of hay wasn't anything and the corn is so dried up, there won't be any to make grain." That could mean farmers will be forced to buy feed at costly prices.

Grey said many fruits and vegetables are doomed and she anticipates an increase in cost for consumers at the grocery store. "Most (farmers) don't have irrigation because of cost or (lack of) water sources," said Grey, who said the region has a drought about once every four years.

"We have six to seven acres of apple trees that we can't water and they are dropping apples," said Ted Dymond, of the second generation farm. "It doesn't look like they will size up at this point. They are stunted." Dymond said the water level from their three man-made ponds is down three feet and must be used sparingly in this drought condition.

Dymond thinks this drought is worse than the one in 1995. "I think the water table is not as high as everyone thinks it is. We didn't have a slow thaw last winter. It's going to take a lot of rain to (raise it again)," he said.

"It's scary. I really feel bad for those farmers without any irrigation," said Dymond, who said although their farm will harvest, the quality will not be there.

Norm Darling, owner of Darling Farms, is one of those without any way to get water to his crops. "It's getting kind of critical. We have no irrigation and no water pump. We just rely on nature," he said. "We really need rain in the next week or the blossoms and fruit will start to fall."

Yet, Darling, whose orchard yields all kinds of fruit and berries, understands occasional drought as part of the business. "It's just one of those things in



Tim Dymond stands next to the farm's irrigation pump. The Dymonds, though hit hard by the drought, are lucky to have an irrigation system to get them through.

POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOTTER

"I think the water table is not as high as everyone thinks it is."

Ted Dymond
Dymond Farm

farming. It's a battle," he said. "You take what you get."

Myrtle Chamberlain, owner of Lehman Nursery, is also reminded of the drought in 1995. The nursery sells potted trees and shrubbery. "If we don't get rain soon, it will eventually do damage to a lot of things," she said.

Chamberlain had a low pressure water system installed in 1994, which saves many gallons of water.

Although most businesses in the area have not felt the wrath of the drought, some are taking precautions to make better use of the

vital resource. Energy Converters (ENCON) depends on water for cooling its furnaces. "Water is critical to our operations," said John Lloyd, vice-president of operations. "If we had to cut back water usage it would be damaging in our case. We run seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Without water we wouldn't be able to run our (furnaces) and produce product."

ENCON is in the process of completing a recirculation system which recycles the water instead of using fresh water. Lloyd said it is a major step toward conservation.

Offset Paperback, Inc., even though it is a large company, is not affected by a drought this size. "We make sure all compressors are turned down at night. Water consumption is not that great," said Joseph Makarewicz, vice president of operations.

Tower

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Russell Newell, also a resident, said that although he had 10 cellular phones, he could tolerate the inconvenience of limited service. "There are dead spots, but we live with it. It seems to me community property should not be used for private enterprise," he said at the meeting.

Cellular One initially claimed the large tower was the only way it could serve its Back Mountain customers, but industry observers say a series of smaller towers could do the job. It has been projected that 100,000 or more towers will be built nationwide.

Despite residents' concerns and a promise to take no further action without notifying residents

first, the township supervisors went ahead and signed a lease contract with Cellular One on April 1. The five-year lease has nine

renewable five-year terms, during which the lease price would rise. But it does not contain any language that would require the company to share revenue gained from sub-leasing space on the tower to other users, a common practice.

The supervisors had originally believed the tower would need a height variance because Dallas Township zoning ordinances limit buildings to 35 feet height. After further research, the township determined that the zoning ordinance did not apply to the cellular tower because the township considered it a public utility. Public utilities are exempt from this criteria. Landry's appeal is based on several precedents that determined cellular phone companies are not public utilities.

The township supervisors

signed the lease because they said the tower will be an advantage to the community because of improved cellular service and the increased revenue for the township. The supervisors are also pleased they will be able to use the tower. "We can put our stuff on it for free. That's the main thing," supervisor Frank Wagner said. "I'm glad it's here."

Kozick also feels it is "good for the community." Supervisor Glenn Howell said, "It's income without raising taxes and that's always good for helping people."

After receiving approval from the zoning officer, Cellular One had to go before the Planning Commission to seek subdivision and land development approval. On June 10, they received the necessary approval and the residents had 30 days to appeal the decision.

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