

HAPPY EASTER!



Renewal update

Our staff has processed more than 21,000 renewals in the past few weeks. We still have about 10,000 to process, so don't worry if you still don't have a stand-alone "R" on your mailing label. If you haven't mailed your label, please do so soon, but **don't mail it twice!** Thank you!

-Editor

Dairy seminars held in Columbia

A dairy risk management seminar and workshop relative to hedging will be held in Columbia on May 2 and June 1. Topics crucial to dairy farming will be discussed by experts in each field.

Among the discussion topics are "Determining your current cost of production through good financial records," "Computing your current milk price and computing your basis," "Tools available to establish a price for your product," "Forward pricing through milk cooperatives," and more.

Registration for both dates will begin at 9:15 a.m., and the seminar will end at 4 p.m. The seminar costs \$10.

For more information, call Pam Martin at (864) 656-3424.

State Farmers Markets Availability Listing

Seasonal In-state "Featured Products"

Columbia SFM
Bluff Rd., Columbia
(803) 737-4664

strawberries, sugar peas,
romaine lettuce & cilantro,
green onions, beets

Greenville SFM
1354 Rutherford Rd., Greenville
(864) 244-4023

seed potatoes, cut flowers,
bedding plants
green onions, sweet potatoes

Pee Dee SFM
2513 W. Lucas St., Florence
(843) 665-5154

plants & flowers, pecans,
spring onions,
sweet potatoes, ferns

Clemson officials search for peach tree disease



While this year's peach crop has gotten off to a good start, it's important for growers to be aware of a disease that affects the crop that was detected in Pennsylvania last year.

Plum Pox Virus, or PPV, is spread by aphids and can cause fruit to be unmarketable and can reduce the yield of infected trees. At one time thought to be contained overseas, the virus was detected in Adams County, Penn., in October of last year. A quarantine has since been placed on peach trees in that county.

In hopes to keep PPV from spreading into South Carolina, Clemson University officials began inspecting peach trees earlier this month. Official began inspecting trees in Allendale County, and then moved to Edgefield and Saluda counties. They are expected to begin sampling the Piedmont sometime in May. When their inspections are complete, between 10,000 and 30,000 tree samples will have been taken. The Clemson inspection is part of a national effort, and all states with commercial production of peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots and cherries have been asked to cooperate with similar inspections across the country.

If you are a peach grower and have questions about the inspections, call H.B. Jackson at (864) 646-2131.

The South Carolina

MARKET BULLETIN

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Volume 74

April 20, 2000

Number 8

Next Deadline: April 25, Noon

Commissioner's Column

Grower Self-help Education, Marketing, and Research Programs

In an ever-changing world market, farmers constantly need to maintain and advance their industries. They may want to support the development of new products or employ new methods to market commodities. They might need to seek research assistance regarding issues such as quality standards, environmental problems and disease control. Perhaps they want to develop educational programs for producers, buyers and consumers. But they don't have the funding to accomplish these goals individually. That's where agricultural marketing orders, which are actually self-help arrangements by and for growers, and the boards that administer them enter the picture.

From time to time, you have probably seen notices in the Market Bulletin or in your local newspaper regarding commodity marketing orders. Agricultural marketing orders, binding compacts between growers, are legal tools under which producers pay assessments, or fees, on commodities sold. These are NOT government-subsidized programs. The programs are funded by the producers themselves through these assessments. Producers request marketing orders via petition and referendum, and they elect boards to collect and manage the assessment revenue.

The various commodity marketing orders and agreements in this state are governed by the S.C. Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act of 1968. The difference in marketing orders and marketing agreements is that marketing orders are binding on all individuals and businesses who are classified as growers or producers, whichever the case may be, in the geographic area covered by the order. Marketing agreements are binding only on growers or producers who voluntarily sign up for the agreement.

The boards consist of producers who are voted into term by fellow producers. Each board position requires a three-year commitment, and each member represents his or her Commodity Board District. The commodity boards do not lobby for or against legislation, nor do they control pricing.

Although all marketing orders are similar in purpose, each commodity has a distinct marketing order. Seven South Carolina commodities have agricultural marketing orders or binding arrangements and established boards for beef, cotton, peanuts, pork, soybeans, tobacco, and watermelons.

Every five calendar years, growers vote to continue their marketing order. A referendum by mail to continue Marketing Order No. 12 (for S.C. cotton) will be held in South Carolina from June 1-14. The Cotton Marketing Order, first issued on July 6, 1990, provides a legal framework for the S.C. Cotton Board to act on educational, market development, and research programs. The S.C. Cotton Board is composed of seven producer members and one ex-officio member to administer their Cotton Marketing Order.

Because of the establishment of the S.C. Cotton Board, growers have been able to fund many research projects through Clemson University. With poor weather conditions and low prices, better yields and better quality cotton is more important than ever. We must continue to support research so that our cotton can compete with foreign grown fiber. And, with the increase in population expected in the near future, we must find new ways to produce enough food and fiber at affordable prices to feed and clothe everyone, protect the environment, and keep farmers in business at the same time. Without funding for research, we may find ourselves dependent on other countries for our basic needs.

Cotton growers can obtain copies of the S.C. Cotton Marketing Order by writing the S.C. Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 11280, Columbia, SC, 29211, or by calling 803-734-2200. If you are not directly involved in the business of agriculture, I encourage you to support those who are. They are working together through the Commodity Marketing Program with their own funding to make life better for all of us.

Les Tindale

