

National



Rain, rain go away

Staff photo by Dave Einsel

Puddles abound on the Texas A&M campus as heavy rains continue to drench major portions of Texas today.

High court refuses Medfly controversy

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court Tuesday rejected a California request to bar five states from refusing its produce because of the Mediterranean fruit fly infestation.

The justices dismissed arguments supported by the federal government, of California officials, who charged efforts by Texas, Florida, Alabama, South Carolina and Georgia to quarantine fruits and vegetables from California were improper restrictions on interstate commerce.

Attorneys for the five states, however, told the justices the quarantine is necessary to protect public health and local agriculture.

California argued that since the infestation is under control, the restrictions are unnecessary, and the action is unneeded because most produce shipped out of California is grown in parts of the state not affected by the Medfly.

Federal officials urged the high court to grant California's request, arguing, "Damage to California's

economy and the ensuing disruption of the national fruit and vegetable market represents an irreparable injury that far outweighs the defendant states' speculative concerns."

Florida told the court it feared a major Medfly infestation could result in "loss of a substantial portion of Florida's citrus and other crops," costing more than \$50 million and threatening the state's foreign markets.

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Although Alabama said its consumers would be hurt by the quarantine because of higher prices for scarcer produce, it said introduction of the Medfly could cause "hundreds of thousands of small Alabama truck farmers to go out of business."

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ERA approval needed, say former first ladies

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Betty Ford and Lady Bird Johnson, counting down the dwindling days for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, challenged America to approve the measure for future generations.

"The fight for civil rights was won because it was the right thing to do," said Johnson, whose husband, Lyndon Johnson, presided over the most important civil rights legislation in the nation's history.

"The ERA is the right thing to do — and long overdue," she said. "For our daughters and granddaughters, we must do no less."

Ford also invoked the civil rights movement in her call for ratification of ERA.

"As a woman and as a Republican, I don't understand how we as a people can continue to hold our heads high and be proud if we have not guaranteed rights to half our population," Ford said. "We are here today to raise the conscience of the nation — those who are with us but have not yet spoken out. We will be in this unit. The ERA is part of the American Constitution."

About 1,000 women, dressed in the green and white colors of the equal rights movement, gathered Monday for an ERA rally at the Lincoln Memorial, site of many past civil rights rallies great and small in size.

It was the culmination of a three-day National Organization for Women convention that dedicated all its effort in the next nine months to winning ratification of the amendment in three more states by the June 30, 1982 deadline.

The ERA, passed by Congress in 1972, stalled with ratification by Indiana, the 35th of the 38 states needed, in 1977.

A survey of political leaders in the remaining 15 states showed little or no hope for passage.

Crowd participants frequently erupted in loud chants, songs, enthusiastically waved banners and plastic green and white "ERA Yes" pennants. One delegation

held a sign reading, "Arizona: Unratified is Unsatisfied."

"We plead with the American conscience that it does not turn back on all the principles it stands for," NOW president Eleanor Smeal said. "Despite all the political predictions, somehow, some way, the spirit will rise up and we will win."

Some in the crowd chanted, "Stop Reagan," and Smeal said the

rally would "send a message to our president."

She said: "Yes, our president has got to hear that this nation wants equality. We will continue to demand equal rights till justice is ours. We are here today because we know this nation has always risen to the challenge for justice. And once more, before it's too late in this century, we must complete the quest for equality under the law."

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