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Coping with grasshoppers latest plight for farmers facing economic hardships

BOISE, Idaho - Idaho farmers, beset by the same economic hardship facing farmers elsewhere, have also had to cope this summer with plagues of voracious grasshoppers and fires that have charred grazing range and forests.

"In some individual cases, the grasshopper problems could very well be the final straw for farmers," says state Agriculture Director Rich-

Even before the natural problems, a survey found up to one-third of Idaho's approximately 25,000 farmers (out of a population of roughly 1 million) had severe financial problems from rising production costs and a low market price for crops.

Wet weather early in the year promised to boost crops of grain, corn, potatoes and sugar beets, but it lso helped hatch a record horde of field-stripping grasshoppers.

And the wet early spring was fol-lowed by weeks of hot, dry weather that set the stage for a very bad fire

It was only 18 months ago that

"In some individual cases, the grasshopper problems could very well be the final straw for farmers." -Idaho Agriculture Director Richard Rush.

were battling to save their crops from mobs of hungry jackrabbits. Rabbit populations in some areas reached 10-year peaks and caused at

least \$10 million damage to crops.

A federal effort late last summer to spray grasshoppers on govern-ment land was limited and too late to stop the insects from laying the eggs that hatched this spring and moved onto private land.

So this spring the federal govern-ment geared up for a spraying pro-ject on government land in the Western states that wound up costing \$35 million. It covered 6.3 million acres in Idaho alone.

In areas where the hoppers swarmed they ate everything that was green and growing, except for

the state's big potato fields which were not as severely affected. Rush said the total damage won't be known until after harvest.

Agriculture officials estimated they killed up to 95 percent of the hoppers in some areas. "It will not be as bad next year as it would be if we had not sprayed this year," Rush

But the remedy caused its own problems because insecticide that kills grasshoppers kills other insects as well, including bees used to pro-

duce honey and pollinate crops. Fires helped control hoppers in some areas. More than 20,000 acres of range in Elmore County was scheduled to be sprayed, but the land was left untreated because fires had done the job.

The Northern Region, which includes northern Idaho, Montana and North Dakota, has had nearly 1,000 fires so far this summer, covering nearly 39,000 acres. That's twice the normal number of fires.

Officials say fires are likely to continue through the end of September, cipitation normally move in.

Fiercest fighting in weeks erupts in Beirut between rival militias

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Militiamen battled across Beirut's dividing line Monday and gunners on both sides sprayed residential areas with artillery fire. At least 16 people were reported killed and 75 wounded.

Among the wounded in the duel between Christian and Moslem fighters was Souha Chahin, this year's Miss Lebanon. It was the fiercest combat in weeks in the capital, where Syria has been trying to impose a peace plan to end Lebanon's decade of civil war.

The latest casualties raised the known toll in the fighting since early Saturday to at least 24 dead and 133 wounded — the highest count since June, when 28 people were killed in an overnight battle.

Police said militiamen fired more than 3,500 shells in 24 hours into residential districts on both sides of the Green Line frontier between Christian east Beirut and the Moslem districts in the city's western and

Each side accused the other of shooting first and no one appeared to know what set off the latest round of sectarian bloodletting.

It came at a time of political maneuvering on both sides and demands from Moslem leaders that Lebanon's Christian president, Amin Gemayel, resign because of his failure to institute reforms that would give Moslems an equal share

Moslems formed an alliance late last month at a meeting in Damascus sponsored by Syria, which has become the real source of power in Lebanon. One of the key Moslem demands was equal power with the Christians, who have dominated politics, the army and the judiciary since independence from France in 1943 but now are a minority of the pop-

The battles with mortars, rockets and 106mm recoilless artillery raged

all night. The fire hit at least 40 densely populated residential neighborhoods on both sides of the 3-mile

Jihar Farr, a 23-year-old medical student, and Hassan Harakeh, a doctor, were killed by a mortar round that exploded on the American University campus in Moslem

Three people were seriously wounded, university officials said, including two women students. They identified one as Miss Chahin, 20, who is studying public adminis-

University spokesman Radwan Mawlawi said both young women were in intensive care at the university's hospital.

Ten townships in hills overlooking Beirut also were hit by the artillery fire. The battle tapered off soon after dawn into sporadic sniper and grenade fire that lasted through the day.

DEADLINE!

Faculty advisors and students should make sure that their student organizations are participating in

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MSC Open House is the four hour showcase of over 100 student organizations. It traditionally has been the best way to recruit new members. Make sure your group is registered before the August 15 deadline. Applications are available in room 216 of the MSC.

For more information, call Chris Bowers, Open House chairman, at 693-9171 or Terri Marsaw, program advisor, at 845-1515.

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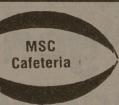
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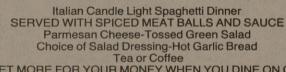
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