

## Pennbel 69 Tobacco Deserves Better Trial

Pennbel 69, the new hybrid tobacco tried extensively in Lancaster County for the first time last year deserves a more thorough testing before it is discarded by growers. County Agent M. M. Smith said this week. He consulted with Henry B. Engle, Agronomist with the US Department of Agriculture stationed at the Pennsylvania Research farm near Landisville, and came up with the following observations:

Some growers in Lancaster County have reported green areas on some of the leaves of the new hybrid tobacco, Pennbel 69. These areas appear to be on the lower to middle leaves and on the lower half of the affected leaf.

Since 1962 was the first season in which Pennbel 69 was widely grown in the county, the Research workers at the Laboratory are concerned regarding this problem. With the purpose of trying to determine the cause of this green discoloration, a survey was made early in February with the help of the County Extension Service. A number of growers were questioned regarding the growing and handling of their crop. We feel there are several items that should be taken into consideration before this new variety, with considerable merit is discarded.

1. The weather conditions during the 1962 growing season were very abnormal. The drought hit when the plants were partly grown and then showed little growth until the heavy rains of early August set off a very rapid growth cycle.

2. After the moisture came the growth and ripening of the upper leaves were normal; however, the lower leaves that had been severely checked by dry weather may have begun to re-absorb nitrates and unable to carry out the normal process of converting nitrates to organic compounds.

3. Many of the affected leaves show that aphids were present, this may have helped to upset the nutritional balance.

4. Other varieties than Pennbel showed green areas on lower to middle leaves.

5. Many crops of Pennbel 69 that were planted and harvested early were of top quality

and were bought at a premium. The ripening season for late-planted crops was cut short by cold weather and these lower leaves with their unassimilated nitrates did not have time to mature.

6. In the nine years of testing of Pennbel both at the Research Laboratory and on farms in different parts of the county, no previous greening has occurred.

7. In recent years local men from the tobacco trade had an opportunity to evaluate Pennbel 69 tobacco. These hands of tobacco were grown on a number of county farms as well as at the Research Farm. These men consistently placed Pennbel at the top in overall quality. Cigar tests made from these crops have uniformly placed the Pennbel tobacco on a par with, or above the standard varieties for smoking quality.

In view of the above conditions concerning this new tobacco variety the Extension Agents in Lancaster County are also concerned as to the facts behind the current problem relating to Pennbel 69 tobacco. We would like to point out that this new variety has yielded good weight per acre and in addition, is resistant to both Wildfire and Mosaic diseases — these are big advantages not to be overlooked.

Therefore in consultation with Mr. Henry B. Engle and Mr. John Yocum at the Field Research Laboratory we would like to make the following suggestions to Lancaster County tobacco growers:

1. Do not discard this new variety until we are sure that it is unworthy of any acreage in the county.

2. Do not plant Pennbel 69 later than June 20th in order to allow for proper maturity.

3. Do not crowd too many plants per acre, the usual number of about 6,000 plants per acre is recommended.

4. When topping the crop leave no more than 16 leaves.

5. If aphids appear, spray with Malathion or Parathion.

6. After hanging in the shed, use either forced air or supplemental heat to hasten the curing process. Heat would be

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## MARCH IS EGG MONTH

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- Do you explain their many nutritional advantages?
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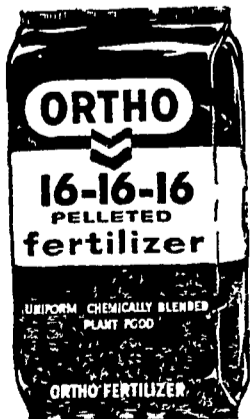
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