

Shortage Of Harvesting Labor Hit By Growers At Pa. Vegetable Conf.

The unavailability of agricultural labor during harvest seasons is one of the greatest problems facing vegetable growers today, William Baronner, of Hollidaysburg, told members of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association at their recent conference on the Penn State University campus.

"In the future we could lose all or part of our crops because of the scarcity of labor," he said. "In fact, I did lose my crop of lima beans this past year because of an insufficient harvest labor force."

Baronner, a commercial vegetable grower said that if we intend to get a share of the local labor supply, we will have to compete more and more with other industries. We can compete in the area of wages but other industries can offer steadier employment and possibly better working conditions.

In summing up the agricultural labor situation, Alvan F. Frank of the Pennsylvania State Employment Service, pointed out that the number of seasonal farm workers employed declined from 21,000 in 1964 to 20,000 in 1965. Fewer resident workers will be available in succeeding years providing the general economy continues to expand, he added.

Three tomato growers explained their experiences with direct seeding practices, saying they had excellent results with direct seeding of tomatoes. They felt any grower who sells to a cannery could profitably direct seed tomatoes providing the soil is in a good physical condition and sufficient moisture is available.

Robert D. Sweet of the department of vegetable crops at Cornell University reported on newer developments in chemical weed control. He said low rates of Atrazine with spray oil and emulsifier applied as a post-emergence spray is very effective on annual grasses and broadleaves in sweet corn. The use of Atrazine at low rates reduces the danger of soil residues, he added.

Pa. Turkey Raising Plans Up 8 Percent

Following the national trend, Pennsylvania turkey growers showed an intention of raising 8 percent more turkeys this year, as of the 1st of January.

If these plans materialize, 17 million gobblers will be wearing Pennsylvania brands in 1966. This will be the largest number raised since 1957.

A breakdown by breeds shows that 83 percent of these will be heavys. Light breeds will account for about 300,000 birds.

The number actually raised in 1966 may vary from original intentions, depending upon grower reactions to the increased estimate, price of feed supply and prices of hatching eggs and poult, and prices received for turkeys in the next few months.

Nationally, turkey growers intend to produce 7 percent more market birds. Most of this increase, if it materializes will be in heavy whites and in light breeds. A national crop of the intended size would exceed 1961's record crop by 4 percent.

Sweet said low rates of Atrazine applied several days before seeding or transplanting has given long lasting

annual grass control and fairly good broadleaf control in beans, broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower.

Burton S. Horne, extension agricultural engineer at Penn State, explained new tillage methods that may be used in vegetable production. He said the department of agricultural engineering is spear-

heading an applied approach to check the adaptability of various reduced tillage practices.

In experiments with corn, Horne pointed out that yields were higher when little soil preparation was used. He said reduced tillage has been attempted in vegetable production with varying results.

He felt more investigations are necessary and most important, the acceptance of minimum tillage practices will depend on the development of planters that will accurately place the small table seeds in optimum conditions.

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