

Cucumber Plants Growing, Acreage Nearly Doubles From 1969; Tobacco Partly Planted

Lancaster County's newest cash crop, cucumbers, has been planted and is "off to an excellent start," according to Harvey Good of Intercourse, field representative for Oxford Pickle Company.

Good said that many plants are "just coming through the soil" and some of the earliest "have leaves about the size of a maple leaf."

Some 82 acres of cucumbers are being planted this year, compared to 48 last year.

Harvest is expected to start between July 2 and 6 and be finished by late August, about a seven-week harvest period.

Good said the average yield last year was 622 bushels per acre with the top 10 of 39 growers averaging 1,020 bushels per acre.

The secret on yield, Good said, is to pick frequently and get the vegetable at the right size.

The major problem with cucumbers, he said, is the cucumber beetle, a black housefly-sized insect with a yellow stripe on its back. The cucumber beetle injects bacterial wilt into the stalk and, if it's not combated, the stalk will die at the bloom stage. After the bloom stage, the bug is no problem.

But if the beetle isn't checked, 60 per cent or more loss in the

plant population can occur, Good noted.

Elsewhere, Max Smith, county agent, said he thinks only about one-fourth of the county tobacco crop has been planted through this week.

Official Predicts 50% Drop in Herds by 1980

Dairy herds will become fewer and larger in the 1970's, predicts A. G. Mathis, head of the dairy section of the economic and statistical analysis division of U.S.D.A.'s economic research service.

Mathis said that by 1980 there may be as few as 200,000 dairy farms selling milk, as compared to about 400,000 now.

He also stated "Now, farms selling milk or cream average about 30 cows per farm. By 1980, the average will be about 50 if recent trends continue. And there will be an increasing proportion of herds with 100 or more cows."

These developments already are apparent in data reported by the census.

"Dairy farming will remain essentially a family operation. Most herds will be in the 50- to 75-cow class. These will be largely family operations, with some hired help."

Asked if he expects the trend of the past several years toward reduced acreage in the county to continue, Smith said he doesn't know of anything that would stop the trend. But there's no way to tell for sure at this point, he said.

He noted that in 1969, some 18,200 acres of tobacco were harvested in the county, compared to 19,100 in 1968.

Because of a good growing season in 1969, however, the lower acreage produced 1,900 pounds per acre with a total value of \$10,374,000, compared to 1,810 bushels per acre worth \$9,679,000 in 1968.

Yield is largely a matter of weather. Like corn, tobacco needs plenty of moisture with moderate summer temperatures. The type of weather so far this Spring would be ideal for tobacco, but right now the ground is getting a little dry and we need a good rain, Smith said.

FACTS ABOUT FARMING

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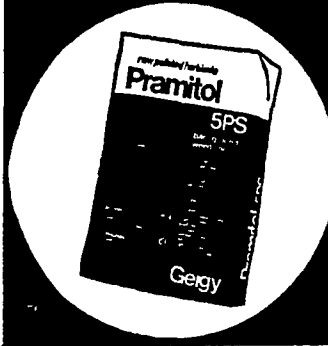
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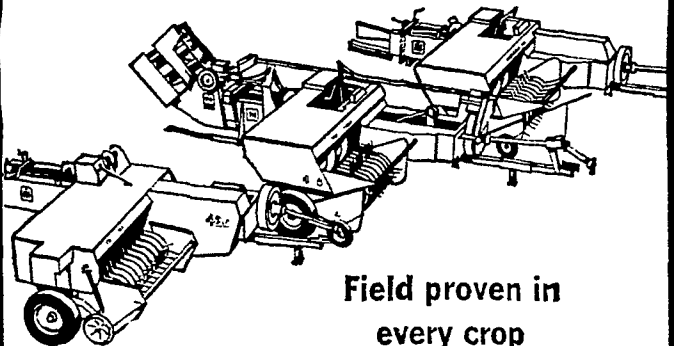
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