

Past County Grange Masters



Past masters of Lancaster County **Pomona Grange**. Standing, left to right: **Melvin C. Boyce**, **Charles G. McSparran**, **Leslie I. Bolton**, **Richard Maule**, **Ralph S. Wanner**, **Thomas Galbreath** and **J. Col-**

lins McSparran. Seated, left to right — **Loran Brinton** and the present Master, **Gyles H. Brown**. Not present were **Jesse Cutler** and **Alfred Wanner**.

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Research Underway Here To Develop Better Potato

Research on developing a better quality potato for the Pennsylvania potato chip industry was conducted this Summer on the Henry G. Shenk farm, Manheim RD2

The Shenk farm was one of two sites in the state for the research by Penn State University. It is expected to take at least three to four years for the research to pay off in the form of a better potato variety.

Dr. Joseph D. Harrington, Penn State department of agronomy, and his assistants Tuesday harvested 30 unnamed test varieties on a one-third acre plot at the Shenk farm.

Harrington explained that the potatoes harvested from the Shenk farm will be graded and selected for quality and stored at Penn State in 52 degree temperatures for three months then stored at 70 degrees for a month.

Then the potatoes will be tested for chip yield and color and actual dry matter content (specific gravity).

"We don't want water. What we are looking for is just how much dry matter is yielded because that is what goes into a potato chip, and French fries."

Harrington stated that at least three years of success with a variety must pass before any recommendations will be made, but that the test time usually is longer. "It could be five to 10 years before we get something

really better than what we already have.

The research is conducted to help provide the farmer with a good, saleable crop and the industry with a top final product, he said.

The 30 test varieties are squeezed into the small amount of acreage by limiting plot length to 25 feet and width to three feet between rows. Each variety is repeated in the field three times.

Mathematical formulas allow the researchers to calculate per acre yields and the sizes of potatoes graded.

Because of the small acreage used, seedlings were planted by hand. Harvesting is done with a modified one row picker.

Every 25 feet, the picker is stopped and gunny sacks into which potatoes are stored by plot and row number are changed.

What makes the research worth it, Dr. Harrington said is the size of the business, both for farmers and the state's 52 potato processors. Potato chips and French fries are a \$150 million-plus business in Pennsylvania.

We harvest more potatoes for processing in Pennsylvania than anywhere else," Harrington said.

In Lancaster County in 1969, some 2,150 acres of potatoes were harvested worth \$13 million. Average yield was about 373 bushels per acre.

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