

Orchardist Explains Reasons for Roadside Market

"We've had as many as 3,000 people stop at our roadside market on a Sunday," said Harry Black, owner-operator of a 150-

acre orchard in Frederick County, Md. He and his brother, Lee, have 50 acres of peaches, and some raspberries, cherries, plums, grapes and tomatoes.

Why do consumers prefer a roadside stand over their local supermarket when it usually means several miles extra travel?

"Here are some of the key reasons they give," says Bob Wearne, Extension horticulturist, U. S. Department of Agriculture:

1. Improved quality because fruit is handled fewer times when sold at the orchard site.
2. Many customers insist tree-ripened fruit has a higher natural flavor
3. Price is not a big factor—usually about the same as at the supermarket.
4. The drive to the orchard with the family is a form of recreation—not a burden. Some of Black's customers drive 75 to 90 miles to the orchard. One

woman drives up with her chauffeur.

Some orchards now feature "pick your own" fruit, which, Wearne said, gives a considerable saving in cost.

Is there a trend to more orchard owners selling their own products?

"Actually, the volume of fruit and vegetables sold at roadside markets has more than doubled in the last three years," estimates Glenn Stadelbacher, Extension horticulturist in Maryland, who has been advising orchardists on how and when to set up their own roadside markets.

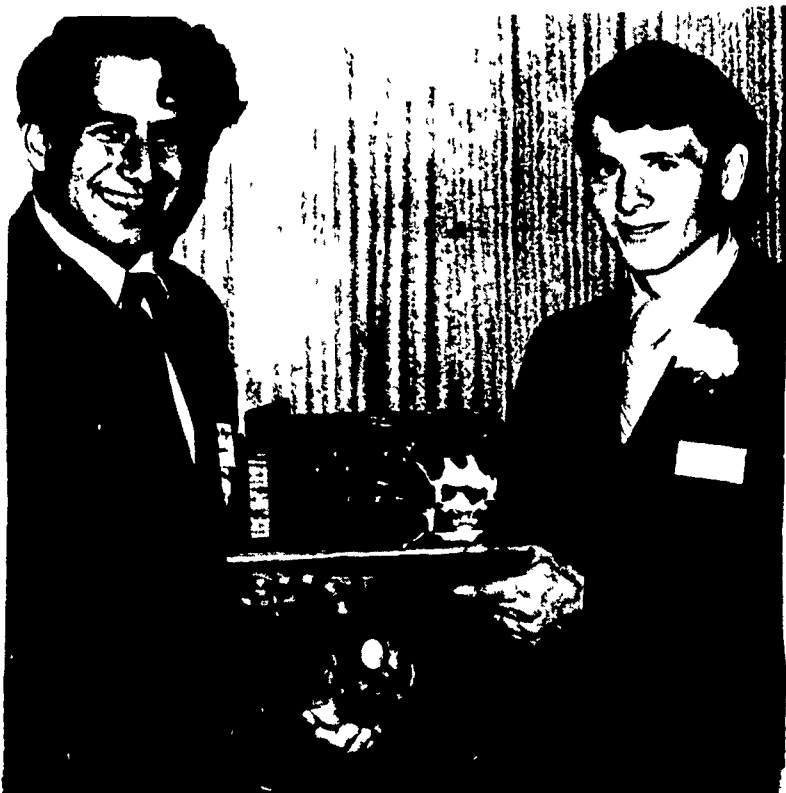
What are some factors the orchard owner should consider in deciding whether he should sell his own fruit?

"It takes more work and management—we are open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. from the first of June until Christmas, but it has made the difference between operating at a profit and staying in business or gutting," sums up Black. He says he has increased his gross income 40 to 50 per cent.

Other advantages Black has found with his own roadside market include: (1) a more stabilized market because of repeat customers; (2) improved quality of his produce; (3) the satisfaction of having more control over his product; (4) more constant prices—does not have to take the fluctuations of the market, and (5) saves labor costs by letting customers pick their own strawberries and black raspberries.

Black points out that orchardists will have the added cost of cold storage holding rooms if they sell their own products. At Black's orchard, all fruit and vegetables are placed in storage as soon as picked to hold the quality. They are moved to the sales area only as customers buy the other fruit. No produce is purchased from brokers to resell as home grown.

A tip on how to let consumers know when a fruit is available: Hand out a calendar to buyers listing the approximate date fruits you sell will be ripe. You can also use a direct mail notice if you have customerregister.



Harold Moyer, left, Lebanon RD2, is the 1971 Pennsylvania Distinguished Holstein Boy. He is shown at the annual Pennsylvania Holstein Association convention receiving congratulations from last year's Distinguished Boy, Earl Stauffer, Ephrata RD1. An active 4-H and FFA member, Moyer has been at several dairy shows in Lebanon and Berks Counties, as well as at the Junior Dairy Show and the All-American in Harrisburg. A sophomore at Penn State University, Moyer has been a junior member of the Holstein Association for eight years and owns seven Registered Holsteins. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Moyer.

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