

## Tobacco -

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straight stripped, X-2 is good quality and X-3 is low quality.

Y grades, Y-1 and Y-2, are used to describe farm filler crops and N grades, N-1, N-2 and No-G are for frozen, substandard or contaminated leaves.

The very finest quality tobacco, C-1, is fine quality stripper, or wrapper, leaves, and these command the highest price. The premium paid last year for C-1, for example, was two to three cents a pound more than the price of X-1 tobacco.

"Grading is an asset to the

industry," Hess says. "because it lets the manufacturer adjust his operation to take into account the kind of tobacco he's using. And the cheapest place to grade tobacco is on the farm while it's being baled."

"In most years, the bulk of the crop will be sold as X-grade. Quite often, tobacco from a particular farm won't warrant the extra time it takes to get the C-1 classification. But if a farmer has a very good crop, it should certainly pay him to try for the higher grade. It usually doesn't take that much extra time, sometimes only a few extra hours. Depending on what the

price differential is, a farmer might be getting \$30 to \$60 more per ton for his added effort."

Hess said that many farmers could easily sell their crop under two grade classifications and boost their average price per pound. Last year, in fact, there was one grower who sold five different grades to the marketing cooperative.

Agway presently buys about ten percent of the Type 41 tobacco grown locally, and everything that comes into the warehouses is graded. Most of the tobacco not bought by Agway is sold on what Hess calls the "one-price system". The one price system penalizes the man who grows a good crop, Hess feels, because his check is smaller than it should be. And it rewards the man who turns out the worst tobacco because he actually gets more than his crop is worth. This system also encourages sloppy management, Hess feels, because it doesn't provide any incentive for trying to get a quality crop.

Hess said that if local tobacco growers want to, they can continue to service their traditional cigar filler market while at the

same time expanding to fill the needs of southern buyers. He said foreign cigar tobaccos are being used in more and more American products, and that the rise in small cigars has also hurt tobacco consumption.

"Since 1966, production of Type 41 tobacco has been reduced by about one-third," Hess commented. "If growers want to keep on growing tobacco in Lancaster County, they'll have to start

producing some product for better markets, and they'll have to produce a quality crop."

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