

Dwarf Trees Seen Most Profitable for Orchardists

Consumers and fruit growers can benefit from new techniques in producing apples, it was reported recently during meetings of the American Society for Horticultural Science in Guelph, Ontario.

For growers who have adequate orchard sites but lack capital, the most profitable system is the semi-dwarf orchard with trees 12 feet tall, stated Dr. Richard C. Funt, formerly graduate assistant at The Pennsylvania State University and now extension pomologist at the University of Maryland.

On the other hand, if the grower has only a small acreage of suitable orchard sites and adequate finances, he would be wise to plant dwarf trees 6 1/2 feet tall, trained to a trellis, or dwarf trees trained to a single pole called the dwarf-spindle system. However, some technical problems must be solved before these systems can be recommended.

Dr. Funt's study of producing apples showed that the highest net return per acre was with hand harvested, fresh market varieties on the dwarf-spindle system. The research was a cooperative effort involving personnel in the department of horticulture and the department of agricultural economics

and rural sociology at Penn State.

Highest gross returns from mechanical harvesting was in the dwarf-trellis system. However, this method had the highest total costs per acre for mechanical harvesting.

Rates of return on investment over a 36 year orchard life were computed at nearly equal for hand harvested, fresh market

varieties on semi-dwarf, dwarf-trellis, and dwarf-spindle systems. To make a rational comparison between systems, an internal rate of return (return on investment) was used by Dr. Funt.

Harvest labor costs are generally 40 to 50 percent of total annual costs for hand harvesting systems, he pointed out. Thus, rising labor costs are more im-

portant to fruit growers than material costs which are generally 15 to 25 per cent of annual costs.

Research has shown that dwarf systems have earlier and higher yields and grades of apples than semi-dwarf and standard systems, the latter with trees 18 feet tall. However, dwarf systems have higher initial establishment costs due to a higher

number of trees per acre, higher labor costs, and greater material requirements.

Dwarf apple trees 6 1/2 feet tall have advantages. Such orchards can be pruned and hand harvested more efficiently without ladders than semi-dwarf trees 12 feet tall or standard trees 18 feet tall. Both dwarf-trellis and dwarf-spindle systems can be "pick your own" or-

chards featuring high quality fruit below retail prices.

In case of hail or wind damage, a dwarf-trellis system can be harvested mechanically at less cost than any other system. And since dwarf systems use small equipment, they require less energy than standard orchard equipment.

In comparing orchards, the standard orchard was calculated at 66 trees per acre with large-size equipment. The semi-dwarf system had 181 trees per acre with medium-size equipment. The dwarf-trellis system utilized 605 trees per acre while the dwarf-spindle method had 792 trees per acre. Both dwarf systems used small-size equipment.

Dairy Farmers Take Story to Washington

Local dairy farmers who are members of Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative, met with the U. S. Department of Agriculture last week and offered strong suggestions for an immediate increase in the farm price of milk. The milk-makers group was headed by dairyman Lester C. Jones, Medford, N.J., president of Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative, and

asked for the adoption of a three-point program

1. A milk pricing system to regain consumer confidence in the industry and producer confidence for continued production.

2. To establish a proper price level that would keep capable dairy farmers "down on the farm", because the next sixty days is a critical decision-making period for dairy farmers.

3. Grant an immediate

hearing to establish a proper base price for a six-month period.

Others attending were directors Daniel L. Martin, Manheim, Pa.; John P. Bradford, Lewistown, Pa.; William Brinsfield, Cordova, Md.; George R. Brumbaugh, James Creek, Pa.; Edwin C. Fry, Chestertown, Md.; Willis L. Greaser, Williamsburg, Pa.; and Roy A. Weaner, Jr., Gettysburg, Pa. Also attending were Dr. James E. Honan, general manager, and Dr. Paul E. Hand, economist, for Inter-State.

Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative represents some 3000 dairy farmers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware,

Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

Obetz Promoted

The First National Bank of Strasburg has named Jere L. Obetz as auditor of the bank according to Donald H. Hoffecker, Executive Vice President. Obetz joined the Strasburg Bank in 1971 as a management trainee and was assigned to the Audit Department in 1973.

A native of Lancaster County, Obetz graduated from McCaskey High School and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Elizabethtown College. He has also received Basic and Standard Certificates of Education from the American Institute of Banking.

Obetz is a member of the

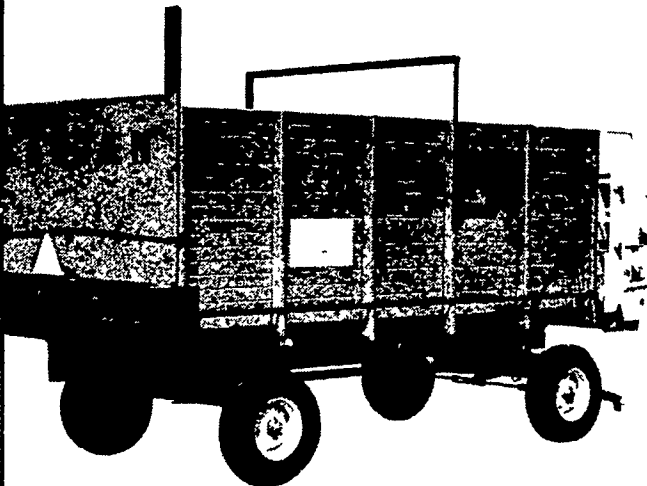
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Institute of Internal Auditors, The American Institute of Banking, and Bank Administration Institute. He resides in Millersville.

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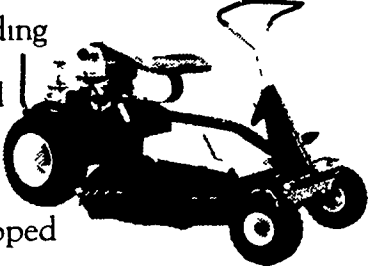
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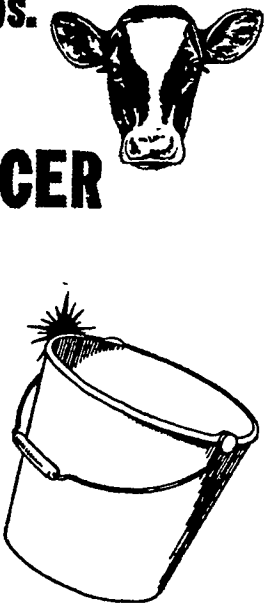
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