

Fruit rot is grower's problem

By MELISSA PIPER
LANCASTER - Although a fresh layer of snow had covered any sign of greenery this week, vegetable growers from the area were already discussing spring planting at a meeting held here on Wednesday.

Sponsored by the Lancaster, York, Dauphin and Lebanon County extension services, the regional vegetable growers meeting featured a slate of speakers from Penn State.

Dr. Peter Ferretti, extension specialist, took the platform during the morning session of the program, discussing strawberries - their production and protection.

Noting that strawberries

were a commodity raised in great numbers in the region, Ferretti named weed control as the worst problem associated with the fruit.

"I think we need to take a lesson from the corn growers," he explained.

"Weed control has become an important part of growing corn just as it has with many fruits - namely strawberries, the better equipped we become to handle weed control the better off we'll be."

Ferretti told the growers that obtaining good plants from the nursery played an important role in harvesting a good crop. "If you get good plants in the beginning, you've won half the battle."

"Look plants over before

accepting them and if they don't meet your standards, don't accept them," the vegetable specialist added.

Included in his suggestions for more profitable crop harvests, Ferretti reminded the growers to plant early for better production next year.

"The berries planted in June will have a much better harvest the next year," he noted, "those planted in September and October really produce less."

Ferretti also stressed the importance of mulching in the fall. "Mulching really helps a lot because it prevents heaving and frost injury, but it must be done at the proper time." Deer season is usually the time for strawberry mulching but

Ferretti explained that the change in color of the plant itself was a much better indicator.

The Penn State specialist explained that pH changes in the soil and herbicide reactions also led to problems with the berries and that careful management practices were essential for good plentiful crops.

Relating his feelings on vine fruit pollination, Ferretti spoke on using bee colonies in the fields for an extra amount of pollination.

"Bees can add up to 25 percent more production because of their pollination," he explained. "Especially in lima beans, the bees are quite efficient."

Fruit Rot Discussed

Every grower has experienced problems with fruit rot in both fruit and vegetable production and Dr. Alan McNab, extension plant pathologist from Penn State, was on hand to discuss the problem.

Identifying fruit rot as a fungus related disease, McNab told the growers that management in the fields was an important part of keeping the rot at a minimum.

"The fungus can live only on dead tissues," he noted, "so when frost kills the berries or when moisture builds up the rotting occurs."

McNab told the producers that spacing when planting was important so that overgrowth could not hold in the moisture.

The plant pathologist then turned his talk to the subject of pumpkin growing. "Raising pumpkins is really concentrated in this area and fruit rot is often a problem."

McNab explained that protection against the pumpkin fruit rot was a problem as it was difficult to obtain good spray coverage. "The vines are really too dense to aid in spraying and poor drainage often hurts just as much."

McNab suggested that growers use high resistant pumpkins, (which are the smaller varieties) use fungicides when possible and avoid injuries when harvesting. Also pre-storage curing by heat treatments were offered as a possible help in reducing the disease incidence.

Cabbage Maggot great problem

The Cabbage Rot Maggot received top honors for posing the worst insect problem of 1975, with the award being jointly offered by Dr. Robert Tetrault, Penn State extension specialist and John Smith, county agent in York.

"Insects are closely related to the weather conditions," Tetrault noted, "and this proved to be an excellent year for the cabbage rot maggot."

Smith echoed the thought by acknowledging that the insects had presented quite a problem due to the unusually wet season during the past year.

The corn flea beetle received second place on the notorious list of insect problems, although Tetrault noted that they had been "more easy to control even though they came in a healthy second."

Tetrault explained that the cabbage maggot often kills seedling plants by feeding on the roots or severely injuring the roots which results in weak plants. "A seasonal spray program for cabbage and other cole crop insects is the only effective means of

keeping plants free from insects," he explained.

Tetrault told the growers that a preventive transplanter water treatment is recommended for all plants set in the field however, he cautioned about using wettable powders in the correct manner, "agitation of solutions is necessary to prevent settling out of wettable powders."

Tetrault concluded his portion of the program by giving recommendations for the various herbicides and how they could be handled for better insect protection.

Arnold Lueck, extension agent in Lancaster, served as program chairman for the morning session of the program and discussed the laws concerning pesticide application. Lueck reminded growers that pesticide courses and exams should be taken as soon as possible to abide with the programs set forth in the state.

John Smith, York extension agent, served as the chairman for the afternoon session of the vegetable growers conference. About 100 producers from all over the eastern section of the state were in attendance.

Milk hearing slated

Public hearing sessions beginning February 17 will be held to consider proposed amendments to the New York - New Jersey federal milk marketing order, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced. The major proposals involve various transportation allowances under the order.

H. L. Forest, dairy official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), said the Feb. 17 session will begin at 1:30 p.m. in the Hotel Commodore, 42nd St. and Lexington Ave., New York City. An additional session will be held in Syracuse, beginning Feb. 23 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sheraton Inn, N. 7th St. and Electronics Pkwy.

The thrust of the key proposals is three-fold, Forest said. If adopted, individual producers would have to bear more of the farm-to-plant hauling cost. Under the present township (or farm point) pricing - unique to this market - handlers and cooperatives

who pick up milk at the farm bear most of this cost.

In addition, the proposals are intended to equalize the cost of milk to all handlers in the market, regardless of their location or whether they obtain their milk on a direct-ship basis or through supply plants.

Also, the proposals would allow distributors in the New York City area to better compete with regulated handlers in the nearby Philadelphia area for fluid milk sales in northern New Jersey.

USDA will evaluate the hearing evidence and decide whether the proposed changes should be made.

Flood control meeting set

Three sponsoring agencies (Manheim Boró Council, Lancaster County Commissioners and the Lancaster County Conservation District) for the Chickes Creek Flood Control will hold a meeting on Monday Jan. 26 at the Farm And Home Center.

The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. and will be held in the training room.

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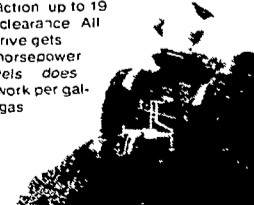
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