

# Claude Hetherington wins state tomato grower award

Claude Hetherington, of Zion Grove, who produced 785 tons of usable tomatoes on 30 acres, has been named a State Champion Tomato Grower for 1975 in the hand

harvest 25 to 50 acre class, according to David L. Kantner, Schuylkill County Agricultural Agent

Hetherington received an engraved plaque for his tomato production and recordkeeping practices at ceremonies during the annual Vegetable Growers Conference on the Penn State University Campus. The State Champion Tomato Growers Club is sponsored by the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service and Pennsylvania tomato processors.

Hetherington, a tomato grower for 30 years, qualified for the award by producing an average of 26 1/7 tons per acre. Tomatoes, cabbage, and potatoes are his most important sources of farm income.

The tomato crop was

planted between May 15 and June 15. Spacing was 36 inches between rows and approximately 20 inches between plants. With a 95 percent stand, this was equivalent to about 8,300 plants per acre.

According to Robert F. Fletcher, Penn State Extension vegetable crops specialist, who made the award presentation, a starter solution was applied at planting time. A 6-12-6-2 fertilizer was plowed down on 15 acres with 300 pounds also applied in bands on each side of the row. On the other 15 acres, 1,000 pounds of 6-12-6-2 was all banded with the transplanter.

Treflan was incorporated into the soil before planting and the crop was cultivated four times. Two daughters, Myrtle and Dawn, and Mrs. Hetherington do all the cultivating.

Four acres of Red Rock and 26 acres of 1370 varieties were planted. Local labor was used to harvest the crop. A field supervisor handled the picking operations and there were no serious labor problems at harvest time.

Harvest labor and field management costs amounted to about 30 cents per basket, Professor Fletcher points out. The tomatoes were emptied into boxes and hauled to a loading area where a forklift was used to dump the boxes into trailers used for delivery to the processor.

A good pesticide control program was followed, using five insecticide and eight fungicide applications. Two insecticide sprays were put on early with a weed sprayer and the remainder of the sprays were applied by helicopter.

Hetherington attributes



Claude Hetherington, left, received the Champion Tomato Grower Award plaque from Robert F. Fletcher, extension vegetable crops professor at Penn State.

his high yield to good growing weather, the fertility program, good pest control program, and ideal local help for harvesting the crop. "As long as I can get boys and girls and other local help, I would never use migrant labor again," Hetherington said. In 1976, he plans to expand his acreage to about 55 if processors' contracts are available.

## \$30.2 billion loaned

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Loans made to farmers and farmer cooperatives through the Farm Credit System during 1975 increased 10 percent from the year earlier to a record total of \$30.2 billion, according to a report issued today by the Farm Credit Administration.

Loans outstanding at December 31, 1975, stood at \$31.7 billion, another record and an increase of 15.8 percent from the \$27.4 billion for the System a year earlier. Net worth of the

System — represented primarily by members' capital stock and accumulated savings — totaled \$4.1 billion at year end, up 13.9 percent from the \$3.6 billion a year earlier.

The 10 percent gain in loans made represents a slackening in the pace of farm borrowings from recent years. Figures from a year ago showed loans made increasing by 16.5 percent, while 1973 borrowings through the System jumped 40 percent from 1972 figures.

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