

Weather hurting celery production

LITITZ, Pa. - It's not news anymore, but it's still true, the winter of 1976-77 has been rough for everyone.

In the Lititz area, one farm family in particular has suffered from the severe cold by the loss of their celery crop.

WILLIAM D. THOMAS, owner of a farm and farm market along the Lititz Pike, south of Lititz, has grown celery for about ten years, according to Mrs. Thomas. Though she couldn't be definite about the effect of this year's hard winter on the crop, she did say that it has been "very much affected by the weather."

She revealed that weather problems began in the fall with the first rush of early intense cold. Fall freezes caused some rotting of outside portions of the stalks, resulting in smaller bundles, she said.

Mrs. Thomas explained that when the celery is prepared for winter, the stalks are cut down to ground level, then placed in trenches where they send out shoots from which the hearts will grow.

If the weather is too cold, she continued, the young

celery does not grow or bleach as well as it should. This year, they had to contend with arctic winds blowing up under the protective coverings of paper, straw, and plastic, as well as the frost which has penetrated the ground to an almost unprecedented depth this year.

But, she added that some loss is not unusual, and they have some rotting from cold each year. Even extremely warm winters can cause stalks to rot, she said.

Most of Thomas' celery is sold through his own market, though he supplies several local markets with celery, too.

Like other county growers, Thomas grows the home-grown variety, which means that the stalks are white and tender with a flavor unmatched by any other celery.

Mrs. Thomas said she thinks Lancaster County is the only place in the nation that grows home-grown, bleached celery. Tourists often come to the market, she said, and wonder what's wrong with the celery because it is so white.

Local consumers, used to

the delicious pale stalks, are often unaware of the method used to bleach the celery. Mrs. Thomas explained that keeping the stalks covered and out of the light prevents them from turning green and results in a less stringy celery. She noted that it also enhances the flavor, though the local home-grown variety may be from a special seed she added.

During the winter when no local celery is available, Thomas buys celery from Florida, "lets it sit" for a period of time, then strips the outer stalks off. This procedure, according to Mrs. Thomas, bleaches the Florida celery so that it resembles the home-grown kind in texture, taste, and color.

Comments on grain invited

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Individuals and firms that will have to register and keep records under a new federal grain inspection law will soon be asked to comment on registration and record-keeping regulations.

Officials of the Federal Grain Inspection Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin drafting the regulations in a few months. Before that, the Inspection Service will solicit ideas and comments from grain merchants, elevator owners and operators, and others who might be affected by the new rules.

The record-keeping regulations will define what records will have to be maintained and how they will be kept. The rulemaking on registration will include policies and guidelines for grain exporters to follow.

Second Opinion
One neighbor goes to the doctor and gets the following diagnosis: "You have the dirtiest, most unkept, uncivilized body I have ever seen." The patient replied that he had been told the same thing by another doctor earlier in the week. "Then why did you come to see me?" "I wanted a second opinion," answered the patient.



N.J. schedules farm meetings

FLEMINGTON, N.J. - Cultural practices, insect control, and a new crop for New Jersey farmers will be subjects of the first Extension Service sponsored series on field crops, livestock and dairy. The first session is scheduled for Wednesday evening, February 9, beginning at 8 p.m. Programs are to be held on successive Wednesday evenings, and are conducted here at Hunterdon's Extension Center, Route 31, North.

Open to all farmers in Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer and other central Jersey counties, the programs will feature the latest research and Extension Service recommendations on a wide range of agriculture operations. Included are the production of field corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, beef, milk, wool, and pork.

The February 9 meeting

will include the following subjects: "A First Year Experience With Kenaf," Jack Rinehart, J-B Farm, Annandale; "No-tillage Forage Renovation" will be presented by one of the area farmers and Dr. James Justin, crop specialist at Cook College.

Also on the program will be Dr. Justin's topic, "Field Crop Varieties for New Jersey" and Dr. Stuart Race, entomologist at the College, on "The Forage Crop, Soybeans, Corn, and Small Grain insect and Bird Picture."

The second session on field crops, February 16, will be devoted to weed control and fertilization.



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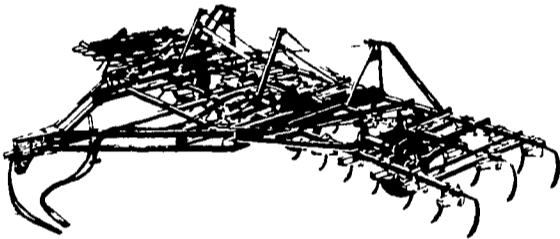
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