

Tobacco nearly all bought

By JOANNE SPAHR

LITITZ — As of Friday morning, approximately 85 to 90 per cent of Lancaster County's cigar and chewing tobacco had been purchased with the majority of that crop selling for 60 cents per pound, straight stripped. This high percentage of bought tobacco came at the end of three days of rapid buying and selling between growers and five major Lancaster tobacco companies. Those five included Lancaster Leaf Tobacco Co., American Cigar Co, Owens Tobacco Co., Lorillard Corp., and Bloch Bros. Tobacco Co., of General Cigar and Tobacco Co.

According to spokesmen for the various tobacco firms, this year's activity was hectic in comparison to other seasons.

"It's been quite a few years since we bought so much so fast," commented Richard Lantz, manager of Lorillard Corp.

He attributed this activity to the fact that growers

acknowledge the presence of damage in their crops and view 60 cents as a good price. Therefore they offer little resistance.

The buying is expected to continue through today and possibly into next week for the top tobacco, with the shed burned crops the last to be purchased.

Unfortunately, buyers report that the badly damaged crops will have to sell lower than the 60 cent floor set by the initial round of buying about a month ago.

"A grower can't possibly expect to get 60 cents a pound for low grade," commented one tobacco firm executive. This sentiment was echoed by another tobacco marketing specialist who pointed out that those companies buying for chewing tobacco are especially on the lookout against this pole burned leaf.

Although about a fifth of the 13,000 acre crop had been purchased in mid-December for 60 cents straight and 70 cents for sorted and tied in

hands, this week's second round of buying offered no confirmed 70 cent levels, although it was rumored that some growers were preparing their crop in this manner.

Although this was a bad curing year, dealers report that deliveries to the warehouse have been well sorted through and the bad leaves taken out.

"We began receiving today," stated Richard Simmons, owner of Owens Tobacco Co., on Thursday evening, "and we've been really pleased. The farmers know what they should do, and they are very cautious about sorting it out. I hope

the rest of the deliveries are this good."

Lorillard also began receiving in mid-week on a small scale, but will be up to capacity by Monday. This time lapse is to give them a chance to assess their crop and prepare for the onslaught of tobacco at the beginning of the week.

The 13,000 acres of tobacco grown last Summer in the county is expected to yield about 23,500,000 pounds or about 1810 pounds per acre. At the current price level, the crop would gross over \$14 million.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

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need for more space. That's especially true when one considers that the large exhibition hall will lose 26,000 square feet after this year so that fire and safety regulations can be met. The absorbed area will be taken up by fire-proof exit corridors.

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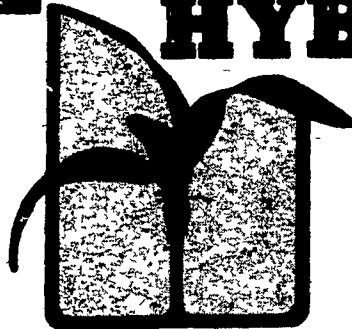
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