

Roadside marketers reveal their sales pitch

By DIETER KRIEG
GETTYSBURG -- In the seemingly insignificant costs of a single paper bag roadside marketing, even are part of the profit for-

mula. A bag saved is a penny saved, and in a day's or week's time, it all adds up.

Roadside marketers from Pennsylvania and Maryland were gathered here last week to share their ideas on the subject. The occasion was the eleventh annual Roadside Marketing Conference. Three days of presentations and a large display area offered the more than 300 roadside marketers a variety of new knowledge and ideas. Several men shared their sales strategies.

A Bucks County fruit grower, for example moves his surplus supplies of sweet corn by offering a dozen free for every dozen sold. He finds that it makes the customer buy more.



Fred Funk
A Lancaster County grower, on the other hand,

says he prefers to begin sales of sweet corn at comparatively low prices, and then raising them gradually as the season advances.

George Huber of Bradshaw, Md. uses the opposite approach. He stresses a high volume business based on his costs and yields. His formula is to calculate investments and estimate yields just before harvest time and then cutting prices to the bone if that's what it takes to move his perishable goods. Often times he attempts to have a lead item to draw customers to his store.

The most important item in Howard Kerr's profit formula is flexibility. A fruit grower from Randallstown, Md., Kerr allows himself several alternatives to get the fruit from the tree to the consumer. He has found different packaging and displays to be helpful, for example. "You have to be flexible with your operation in order to max out," he emphasized before his audience in the Gettysburg Sheraton Inn.

One of Kerr's tactics is to skim his best fruit from the orchards before routine picking begins. This results in extra large, premium quality fruit which command top prices in his store. With peaches, for example, he was able to sell the custom picked specimens for \$7.50 per half bushel, compared to \$4.50 per half bushel for the mass picked peaches.

Cull peaches are sold in 3-



Howard Kerr

pound bags at tail-gate markets in Baltimore. On a half-bushel basis, Kerr says his cull peach price comes out to \$8. Still higher returns are realized through the pick-your-own program, where the equivalent half-bushel price can be as high as \$22.50. While the customer pays only a fraction of that price, Kerr counts the savings he has in labor to come up with his standardized return. He does acknowledge, however, that the pick-your-own program results in some damaged trees which would not have been hurt if hired pickers were on the job.

In all phases of his fruit retailing business, Kerr stresses quality. It's essential if the grower wants

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