

# Vegetable variety handled at packing company

By SALLY BAIR  
Staff Writer

LANCASTER - Ever dream of the hundreds of pumpkin pies which can be made from all those squash laying in the fields waiting to

be harvested at this time of year?

At Consumers Packing Company, Plum and Liberty Streets, Lancaster, the dream is a reality as they process 100-120 tons of

squash daily into frozen pulp ready to be made into delicious pumpkin pies.

Consumer Packing, which began as an ice company, is in its 75th year, and its largest locally grown



Haines Walker, left, plant manager, and Mervin Hess, field manager, look over part of the daily processing run of squash.



Frank Snaveley, on the left, and Robert K. Bowman, proudly show off the Consumers private label for their frozen foods.

products are hubbard and butternut squash which are processed for use in pies. There are over 24 farmers in Lancaster County supplying the squash, with the larger supply area stretching north to Gratz in northern Dauphin county and east to Huntingdon county. The size of the crop ranges from one acre to 120 acres.

Robert K. Bowman, vice president and general manager for Consumers, says that squash is a good cash crop for local farmers, and while some harvesting is done by machine, much of

the crop in this county is harvested by hand.

Bowman characterized this year's crop as "super-yielding crops, with record field yields." He said at first the squash appeared to be very small in size, but the weight is heavier than usual, so he added, "It looks like it will be a record yield."

Because of the wet May weather, Bowman said that farmers were about two to three weeks late in planting the crop, so Consumers is running two weeks late with their harvest. However, if there is no heavy frost in the

near future, the squash will be in heavy production from now until Thanksgiving.

Another large volume food processed at Consumers is frozen double cut white sweet corn which is packaged for the John F. Cope Company, Inc. This sweet corn comes mainly from Pennsylvania and Maryland, Bowman said.

Because of the sandy soil in Maryland and New Jersey, these two states are the firm's largest supplier of spinach, a product which is processed in large quantities at Consumers. Green and wax beans are frozen there, with the bulk of that crop harvested in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. However, Bowman noted that they contract for beans from Florida to New York State. He added that they like to purchase crops as close to their plant as possible.

Obviously the largest part of Consumer's business is processed during the high yield summer months, but mushrooms are processed there year round. Many of the mushrooms come from neighboring Chester County, but Butler County in western

(Turn to Page 38)

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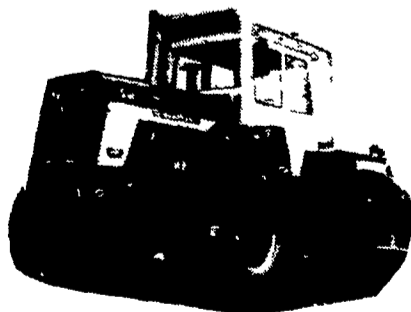
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