

# Champion tomato growers honored for yields

By JOAN LIESAU  
**HERSHEY** - Top tomato growers were honored on February 6, at a Tomato Awards Luncheon held in conjunction with the 1979 Pennsylvania Vegetable Conference at the Hershey Convention Center, Hershey.

The champion growers in the different classes received an engraved plaque for their high tomato production and record keeping practices. The contest is sponsored by the Tomato Processors of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Furman Farms, Inc., of Northumberland R2, was top producer in the Machine Harvest, over 150 acre class. Furman Farms produced 3087.97 tons of usable tomatoes on 168 acres. They averaged 18.3 tons of usable tomatoes per acre. The product was processed by Furman Canning Company.

In 1978 the Company started using a 1978 Model Button-Johnson Harvester with an electronic sorter. This is the first electronic sorting machine model in Pennsylvania and probably the first on the East Coast. This season, 100 per cent of the total Furman acreage was machine harvested.

Several standard machine harvest varieties and extensive field trials of new varieties and strains are planted each year at Furman Farms. In 1978 the varieties VF 134, C-37, and B-1 (just released as US, 141; formerly 75B18, 76B141, and 77B16) were the main varieties planted for early harvest, with 95 acres planted to the latter for a more promising "whole-pack" use. Approximately 30 acres of Red Rock was used for the late crop.

Kepler Farms, Inc., Milton, were the top winners in the Machine Harvest-50 to 100 acres division. The farm produced 1352.71 tons of tomatoes on 80 acres for American Home Foods. Using southern field-grown plants of Chef, Merit, and C-

37 plus tray-grown plants of Chef, Merit, and Red Rock, the Kepler Farms operation was able to average 16.91 tons of usable tomatoes per acre. The Farms owner is F. Parson Kepler, Sr.

The Schwartz family, Lykens R1, (Dauphin County) produced 1536.44 tons of tomatoes on 45 acres to become the Champion Tomato Grower for 1978 in the Class 4 Machine Harvest category. The Schwartz family has grown tomatoes for 20 years and qualified for this year's award when they machine harvested 34.14 tons per acre for American Home Foods. In 1976 Robert W. Schwartz qualified for the Class 4 award when he machine harvested an average of 23.10 tons per acre on 40 acres.

Successful growers, the Schwartz family follows a two-year rotation. Timothy sod and wheat stubble are plowed down with poultry manure before the fields are planted to tomatoes.

Calvin Group of Gardners R1, (Adams County) picked 1037 tons of tomatoes on 42.5 acres for an average yield of 24.4 tons per acre. Mr. Group was selected as the top producer in the Hand Harvest, 25-50 acre class. Varieties grown for the Musselman Fruit Products Division of Pet, Inc. were C-17, C-37 and VF-134 Georgia-grown transplants. Group only grows field corn and processing tomatoes on his farm.

Lloyd Wehry of Klingerstown R1, (Schuylkill County) won the award for the highest tomato yield in the Class 3 Hand Harvest competition for growers with five to 25 acres. Mr. Wehry picked 210.04 tons of tomatoes for American Home Foods on five acres for a 42.01 ton per average yield. The entire crop was produced from Heinz 1370 Speedling plants.

Mr. Wehry's fieldman attributed his high production to a good stand, excellent weed control, a good fertilizer and pesticide spray program, and ideal

conditions throughout most of the harvest period.

Two men from Lancaster and York County were recognized for their high

yielding hand harvested tomato crop.

Harvey S. Martin of Ephrata R4, harvested 6 acres producing 27.02 usable tons per acre. Martin has his

tomatoes processed through Musselman's Division of Pet, Inc.

Donald Diehl of New Freedom R2, planted 16

acres of tomatoes which yielded 25.13 usable tons per acre. Charles G. Summers Jr., Inc. processed the tomatoes.



Champion tomato growers were honored on February 6 at a Tomato Award Luncheon during the Vegetable Growers Convention at the Hershey Convention Center, Hershey. Carl Rovenolt, front row, left, accepted the machine harvest, 50 to 100 acre award which was won by Kepler Farms, Inc., Milton. Jim Kohl accepted the machine harvest, over 150 acre award for Furman Farms, Inc. Charles Marks accepted the award for Calvin Group. Mr. Group (not shown) won the hand harvest, 25-50 acre class. Bill Garman accepted the award for Lloyd Wehry of Klingerstown R1.

Wehry won the hand harvest competition for growers with five to 25 acres. Standing, left to right are Dr. Peter Ferritti, associate professor of vegetable crops Extension at Penn State, and Robert Schwartz. Schwartz accepted the award for Schwartz and Schwartz who won the machine harvest, over 150 acre award. Presenting the plaque to Mr. Schwartz is Cindy Lesser of Milton R3. Cindy is this year's tomato queen. The right of Cindy is David Geise, president of Furman Canning Company.

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