

# Adams County apple growers help USDA program

**GARDNERS** — Local apple growers and packing

companies recently participated in the United States Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition and Elderly Feeding Programs supplying fresh 1979 apples throughout Pennsylvania and several neighboring states.

USDA purchased approximately 382,500 cartons of apples at 40 pounds net per carton, a total of 15,339,000 pounds, for distribution throughout the United States.

Rice Fruit Company of Gardners, Adams County was one of the state's companies which received a large portion of the USDA contract. The apples were to be grown in the United States and bids could be

received from growers, cooperative associations, or growers' authorized agents.

Rice Fruit Company contracted for 77,400 cases which included Rome Beauty, Stayman, Delicious and York Imperial apples. Another Pennsylvania company, Mountain Orchard Cooperative, Inc. of Aspers, Adams County, contracted for 3600 cartons.

The apples were shipped between November 16 and January 31, 1980, with most of the Pennsylvania contracted apples shipped to cities in Pennsylvania. A few shipments were sent as far away as Florida, Massachusetts, Texas and Illinois.

Special standards, United

States Condition Standards, were employed for this special program. Any loads of apples packed for the program were limited to five percent ripe apples, a maximum of two percent scald and decay and the apples were required to grade a minimum of U.S. number one. Federal Inspectors were on hand at the packing sites to insure quality control.

At Rice Fruit Company, thousands of apples enter the plant facilities, traveling through large troughs of water, to prevent bruising and to remove dirt and dust.

Two dozen sorters pick out the defective apples which may show damage on the

outside due to hail, bruises, scars or insect damage.

The apples are then sorted into four colors and twelve different weights in a Electronic Pre-sorter, unique to the East Coast. As they are electronically sorted, the apples drop into 12 different flumes (water alleys ways) according to the apples' classification.

When each flume is filled, the apples are crated and dipped in "stop scald," which prevents storage scald (the discoloration of skin from light to dark, creating a spoiled look). Storage scald can break down to soft scald, creating apple decay.

A tote bin, which holds 16 bushels of sorted apples is stamped, according to variety, grade by color and size.

The apples are then stored at 31 degrees Fahrenheit (apples freeze at 28.4 degrees Fahrenheit). The higher the sugar content, the lower the freezing temperature of the apples. Trucks used in transporting apples for the School Lunch Program are kept at 33 degrees Fahrenheit.

A large building at Rice Fruit Company is utilized for Controlled Atmosphere storage for 28,000 to 30,000 bushels of apples. The room is closed air-tight and the oxygen is reduced to two to five percent or less, for a total of 90 days or more.

The Controlled Atmosphere program is regulated by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Fruits and Vegetables Division.

Depending on type of ship-

ment, some of the apples will be waxed before entering storage. The Federal School Lunch Program does not require waxing. As apples are removed from storage for shipping, they are again hand sorted for pickouts before entering the shipping cartons. Each case of apple cartons for the Federal Program is individually stamped by an inspector.

## Schuylkill sets beekeeping talk

**SCHUYLKILL HAVEN** — Everyone is welcome to come to the beekeeping program sponsored by the Schuylkill County extension service and the Schuylkill County Beekeepers Association.

Clarence Collison, Beekeeping Specialist from Penn State, will present a program on "Spring Management of Honeybees".

The program will be held Tuesday, February 26, 1980 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 202, Building C, at the Penn State Schuylkill Campus, Schuylkill Haven.

For more information, contact Dale D. Moyer, County Agent, at the Extension Office - 717/385-3431.

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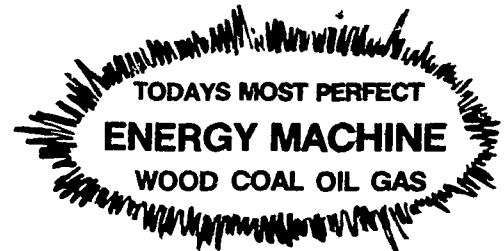
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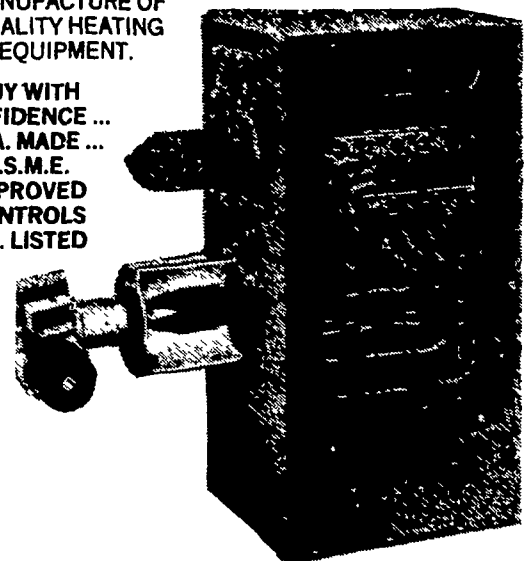
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