New melons, cukes top commercial list

DOVER, Del. — A number of new melon and cucumber varieties show good promise for commercial vegetable growers.

Mike Orzolek, University of Delaware extension vegetable specialist, reported on some of these new hybrids during the recent annual meeting of the Delaware Vegetable Growers Association in Dover.

Among cantaloupes which have performed well in variety trials at the University's Georgetown Substation is one line that goes by the designation XP-771. Similar to 'Gold Star', he said it has good disease resistance and is a good shipper. They've been testing it at Georgetown for the past four or five years.

It's not scheduled for release by the breeder in 1981.

Another cantaloupe that looks good for Delaware growers is a line called GQVW. This has better mildew resistance than 'Gold Star' and produces similar fruit.

For roadside marketing, 'Supreme Delight' looks good. This lope has medium mildew resistance and comes on a little later than 'Gold Star'. It's not a good shipper.

One of the most unusual melons undergoing testing at Georgetown right now is a variety called 'Green Pearl'. Developed in Japan, it looks like a cantaloupe until you cut it open. But the sweet, jucky flesh inside is green like a honeydew.

This is a very late variety but has good disease resistance. Set out the first of May as a transplant, it should be ready for early August harvest on plastic, said Orzolek.

Performance trials on watermelons also show some promising new hybrids for area producers.

One of these is a new Florida release called 'Dixielee'. This produces an oblong, 20 to 30 pound striped melon which comes on later than 'Charleston Gray' or 'Crimson Sweet'. It has excellent red flesh and is 15 to 20 percent sweeter than other watermelons.

Seed currently is available to commercial growers from the Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc., Box 14006, University Station, Gainesville, Fla. 32604.

The specialist recommended trying a small planting this year to see how you like it. The melon has good shipping qualities and could fit well into a shipping program.

Another good performer at Georgetown last summer was 'Mirage', a crimson sweet class melon. 'Blue Belle' is a sugar baby class that looks good. It has about the same maturity as 'Sugar Baby' but produces slightly larger fruit.

Moving on to another cucurbit crop — cucumbers — Orzolek reported on several new slicers. 'Market More 76' has better disease resistant than its predecessor 'Market More 70'. It also comes on a little later.

'Pacer' and 'Southern Set' also look good. Though not a very heavy yielder, 'Southern Set' produces excellent fruit. The specialist also recommended 'Poinsett 76', a slicer that's a bit later than 'Market More 70'.

Reporting on results of cultural studies on curcurbit crops at the Delaware Substation, he said the biggest difference in yields came with the use of mulch. This improved fruit size as well as flavor and yield per acre. In most years, he said, a plastic mulch will pay.

Another cultural practice that paid off last year at Georgetown was narrower row spacing for watermelons. When they went from a 7-foot row to a 3.5-foot row they got much quicker vine running and row cover, with fewer weeds.

The closer spacing didn't boost yields an it did produce slightly smaller fruits, but the advantage in reduced herbicide use — especially on watermelons — appeared to outweigh these disadvantages.

The system gives excellent control of broadleaf weeds.

Noting some cultural problems related to last summer's wet weather, Orzolek also had some advice for people growing the 'Summet' variety of cantaloupe. With all the rain there was a problem of cracking and splitting with this lope, but he still feels it's worth growing.

Just be sure to grow it on well-drained soil, he said; or on ridges, if you're using plastic mulch.

Eastern figures CNI proposal could cost $10,000 per farm

BINGHAMTON, N.Y. — Dairy farmers supplying the New York-New Jersey market could lose $170 million a year, nearly $10,000 per producer, under a pricing scheme being studied by the Federal government. Its adoption could cost rural economies in this area alone more than a half billion dollars annually.

Businesses and local governments serving these communities would be seriously affected. The rural economies throughout the Northeast, where dairy farming is the predominant agricultural industry, would be seriously depressed.

These are among the comments by Joseph C. Mathis, of Manlius, New York, a nationally known dairy marketing economist, at a hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Dairy and Poultry, in Binghamton, New York, on February 4, 1980.

Mathis is the Manager of Economics and Research for the 4000-member Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative Association, headquartered in Syracuse, New York

His warnings were aimed at a proposal being pressed on the U S Department of Agriculture by the Community Nutrition Institute of Washington, D C

The CNI is asking that reconstituted fluid milk products be exempt from government price regulations even though they compete directly with regulated dairy products in the marketplace. Reconstituted dairy products are made by mixing powdered skim milk with water, and in some cases a form of fat, to produce fluid skim, low-fat or whole milk products.

Mathis explained that adoption of the CNI proposal would result in the intolerable competitive inequities among milk dealers which could cause the current price structure to collapse.

Such an event likely would necessitate the termination of the Federal order program that has maintained orderly marketing conditions in the dairy industry and has assured adequate supplies of fresh dairy products for consumers for the past 40 years.

As dairy farm resources shift away from the Northeast and Southeast, the dairy product needs of the major population centers along the Eastern seaboard would become dependent upon production areas in the Upper Midwest. The transportation of supplies over such long distances not only would waste precious energy, but consumers here likely would be left with products of lower nutrient value at higher prices.

Mathis congratulated the Congress for assuring dairy farmers of at least 80 percent of parity price supports for the next two years. He indicated that their action would provide milk producers with the financial security and economic incentive to produce adequate supplies of milk to meet current and future needs of consumers.

Even so, milk prices paid to farmers in this region are expected to increase only about 8 5 percent this year, compared to an anticipated inflation rate of about 12 percent in the costs of production

Turning to the need for strong cooperative associations, Mathis noted that agricultural cooperatives provide the only legal means through which individual family farmers can attain countervailing bargaining power against the overwhelming concentration of market power held by the buyers of their products.

Any recommendations which would seriously undermine the market power of cooperatives, as advocated by some, while doing nothing about market power elsewhere in the economy would place farmers at a serious competitive disadvantage and would lower their returns to labor and capital.

To date, Congress wisely has rejected such recommendations, noted Mathis.

Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative also is deeply concerned about the growing threat posed to both the dairy industry and consumers by the growth of fabricated imitations of dairy products and the unrestricted importation of casein which is finding its way into the nation's food supplies, he said.

Mathis noted proper labeling regulations must be instituted to protect consumers from outright fraud and to assure the economic viability of the nation's dairy industry.

Finally, he said in the event fuel rationing or allocation programs are instituted, the farm and food processing sectors must receive priority use if consumers are to continue to enjoy an adequate supply of food at affordable prices.

Dairy agriculture in the Northeast, as in the nation as a whole, is a paramount industry of vital importance to the public welfare.

In the 10 states that comprise this region, some 50,000 farmers produced 23.8 billion pounds of milk last year (about 20 percent of the nation's supply) having a cash receipt value of more than $2.5 billion. This added more than $7.7 billion to the rural economies of this region.

Farm cash receipts from dairy products represent about 42 percent of those for all agricultural products produced in the Northeast.

THINK AHEAD...

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