

# Mushroom growers lobby for some import relief

NOTTINGHAM — The U.S. International Trade Commission met Monday in Washington, D.C. to consider a petition filed by the American Mushroom Institute to curb imports of canned mushrooms.

A group of about 20 Chester County mushroom growers went to Washington to make sure their

representatives and congressmen from across the country know about the current situation in the mushroom industry.

The lobbying trip was coordinated by Pennsylvania Farmers Union.

Mushroom growers, mainly from the Nottingham, Oxford, and Kennett Square areas, spend

two days combing the Capitol for support.

Among the influential congressmen they were able to contact were Congressmen Herman Talmadge and John English. Both sit on the Agriculture Committee.

In all, the growers got into about 130 Congressional offices.

The growers asked for a favorable statement on the troubles of the mushroom industry. They seek relief under Section 201 of the trade act which will advise the President of the problem and require him to limit imports for five years.

Twice before the growers have gone to Washington for similar relief.

The first time the ITC report was favorable to the growers but Richard Nixon turned down the committee recommendation and allowed the flood of imports to continue to grow.

The second time Gerald Ford delayed a decision so long it fell to Jimmy Carter. Carter asked the foreign nations for voluntary action to limit their exports to the United States but got none. So, there was no help for domestic producers.

The growers' lobbying session started with an orientation when the growers were briefed on facts and statistics which they may not have had at their fingertips.

Among other dismal facts they learned that 55 percent



Among those making the trip to Washington to ask for government support of the U.S. mushroom industry were Dick King, local chairman; Bob Carroll; Jim Davis; Ken King; and Marjorie Edwards. All are from the Oxford-Nottingham area.

of the canned mushrooms consumed in the United States now are produced overseas. Just eight years ago that figure stood at only 19 percent.

At one point growers were told that they should "become more efficient" in order to compete with the foreign competition.

Growers pointed out that

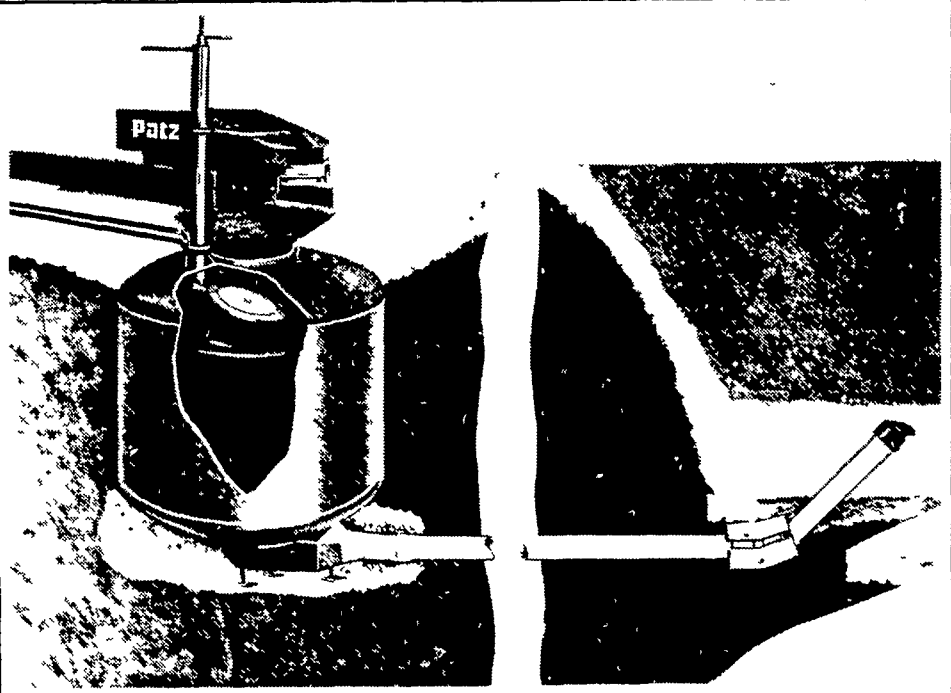
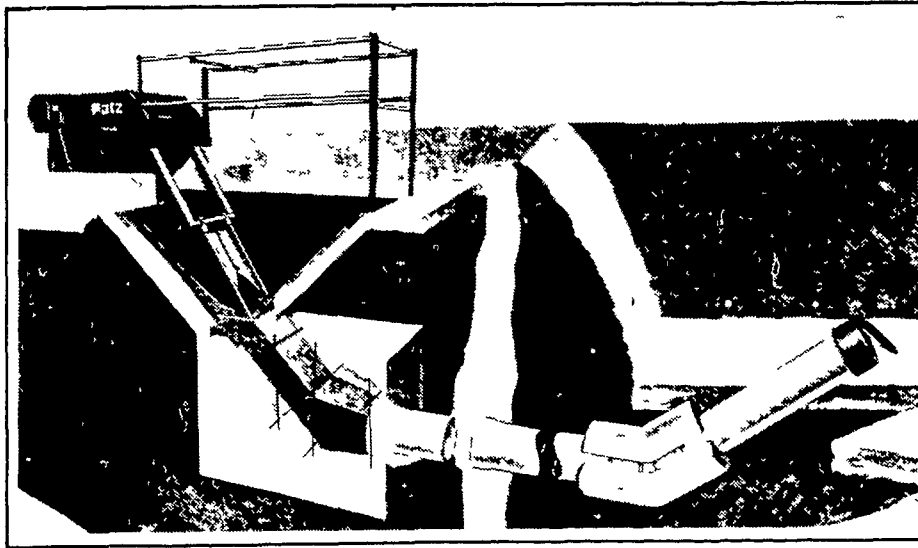
they already are the most efficient producers of mushrooms. On a square foot basis they produce more

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U.S. Senator John Heinz addressed growers Wednesday afternoon and was sympathetic to their requests. Boxes of mushrooms on the floor were distributed to congressional offices all over Capitol Hill.

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