

Fruit growers tour top orchard operations

BEDFORD COUNTY — Some 200 fruit growers and members of their families took part in a two-day tour of various orchard operations under the auspices of the State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania.

Host group for the first day of the tour was the Southern Appalachian Growers Association. Among the operations visited were:

AMICK ORCHARDS - The assembled growers inspected the refrigerated storages, packing facilities, dipping tanks, high lifts, bulk bins and office arrangements.

The really impressive features of the Amick operation was in the orchard area. A magnificent site beautifully located on a high ridge of chert soils with a beautiful view in all directions automatically rates this as one of the truly outstanding orchards in Pennsylvania. Don Amick, the present owner succeeded his father in the orchard business.

Exceptional skills in selecting various strains of apple varieties on appropriate rootstocks, pruning practices, weed control, cover crops fertilization and pollination procedures are a few features of this operation.

A few Beacon apples are grown but the bulk of the production consists of Delicious, Golden Delicious, Stayman and Rome. A few PYO cherries are also grown.

WRIGHTS - The Wright Brothers succeeded their father in the orchard business just as Amick did. One feature is the terracing of a very steep hillside, now planted in young trees, which converted essentially unproductive land into potentially valuable orchard land.

SHOENTHAL ORCHARDS - It's now owned by Henry Shoenthal - Henry who is also a Country Store operator. This store has been a family operation for over a

hundred years. Newly spaced modern strains on appropriate rootstocks are especially suited to his 40-50 foot deep well drained soils.

An additional feature has been the exceptional color achieved.

BOYERS ORCHARDS - Allan Boyer has spent much of his working years in the steel industry. His first love is the fruit industry and his remarkable achievement in converting a few hilly acres into a viable productive creation would certainly put him near the top of the class. The question frequently raised by the touring fruit growers was, how was a part time operator able to obtain such unusual uniformity in his new plantings?

ICKES I & M ORCHARDS - Enroute from Boyers to Ickes a small fruit and vegetable farm was observed. The big surprise, however, was the diversity of the Ickes operation. Fred Ickes grows cherries, both tart and sweet, peaches and

of course apples all in sod. His really interesting feature, however, is his large collection of peach and apple varieties. Much of his fruit is marketed on a pick your own basis.

MATTERNS HOLLIDAY HILLS ORCHARD - Operated by Mr. & Mrs. Richard Mattern and their

son, Dave, it was a fitting stop for the evening's program. The splendid new sales area is worthy of note.

An amazing planting of pears of all sizes, varieties, numerous rootstocks, interstems, trellis trained and free standing trees, bearing a heavy load for the most part, were viewed. Dick was

an early advocate of size controlling rootstocks. Since he is a former president of the so called Dwarf Tree or Compact Tree association of the U.S. and Canada he has a vast number of combinations to observe on his farm.

When it was nearly dark a
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Group of fruit growers gather to hear explanation at one of many stops during recent tour of orchard operations in Bedford County.

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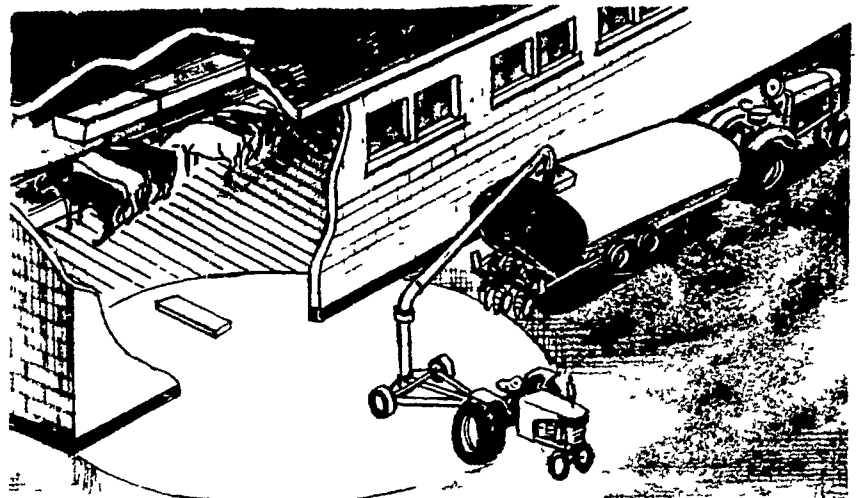
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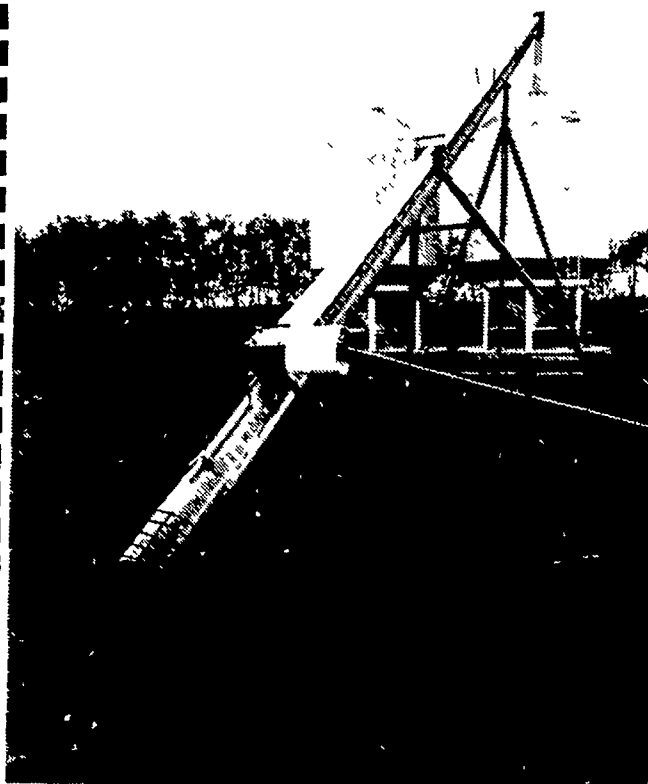
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