

# Homestead Notes

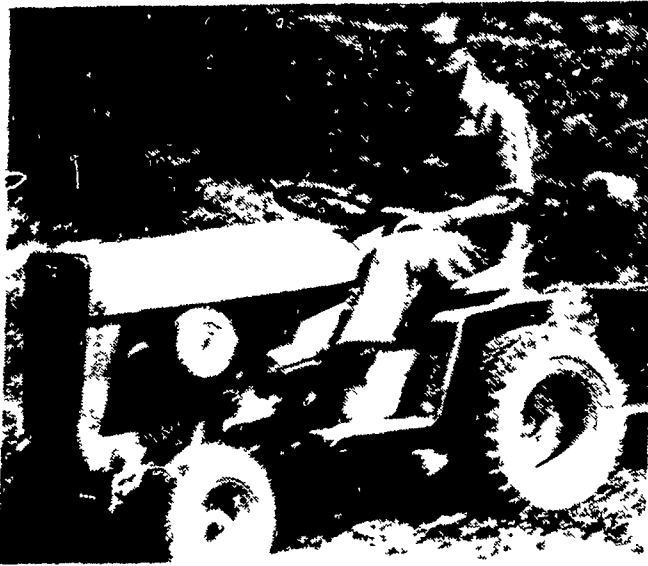
(Continued from Page C2)

customers - we know them and they know us. We enjoy our customers," Charles states.

With 17 acres planted in vegetables, there is always something to be done. Mrs. Charles smiles and says, "I see very little of the inside of my house during the week." Charles acknowledges, "You never feel caught up from the first planting until the first frost." But he does use several cultivating tricks that make the work easier. "We don't plant so thick. I leave wide rows to harvest." He also plants on all the rows and at the barn, for ease of bringing in produce.

Charles notes, "We could sell more than what we have, but we don't plan to expand in volume." They do like to try new things occasionally, but sometimes it doesn't prove successful. Mrs. Charles recalls her experience this year with Anam beans, which she was encouraged to try. When they were ready no one wanted to buy them, so they donated them to the Mennonite home. They are growing the new sugar snap peas, and say that once people try them they really like them.

They also have favorite varieties. They grow silver queen sweet corn exclusively as well as Astra green beans, Jet Star tomatoes, and Progress No. 8 snail peas.



H. Raymond Charles spends a lot of time on this tractor bringing produce from his fields to the roadside stand he and his wife operate out of their barn.

They have a few raspberries and a few thimble blackberries but these are mostly for the family.

Mrs. Charles enjoys preserving food in her freezer and she says the day before they open their hull pea fields for pick-your-own she picks and freezes her own. Other vegetables she works in and often freezes in the evening if there is something left unsold at the stand which might go to waste.

While they like to pick produce in the morning, Charles says, "Since we're more retired we don't get up so early. We're trying to wind down as we wind up." He also says, "We don't run around so much in the summer but if church work comes up we like to be available." He says any vacations come in the winter-after pumpkins, another specialty.

Charles was pastor at the Chestnut Hill Mennonite Church for 23 years and is now Bishop for the Landisville district, which includes five Mennonite congregations. He also served as president of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions at its headquarters in Saunaga for 23 years. He has retired from that, but he developed "a relationship with Mennonites outside our region," and continues building on those relationships. Much of the travel that Raymond and Anna Lois do involves churchwork. Four years ago they visited Africa and South America, three years ago they went to Israel, two years ago they went to the Caribbean and Central America area, and last year they traveled to Florida. One year, early in their marriage, Charles traveled around the world.

The bread and butter of the farm is a broiler operation which houses 45,000 birds annually. The birds are under contract and require about two hours every morning and a few checks throughout the day. They have just received

new chicks so the heat warre has not yet been detrimental to them.

Charles moved to their Marietta Pike farm when he was six years old, adding, "My wife joined me when we got married. We started with layers and during the war we changed to broilers." He explains that his father was once a tobacco farmer but developed a conviction that it wasn't right to grow a crop that couldn't be eaten. He then began growing peas, carrots, lima beans and tomatoes for canneries. That is a little how we got into this. But there is not enough acreage to be profitable for a cannery. We could plant more intense but this is the way we like it."

There is no doubt that Raymond and Anna Lois like their operation just the way it is. Their customers are raised friends and the Charleses happily provide them with fresh produce from their bounty.

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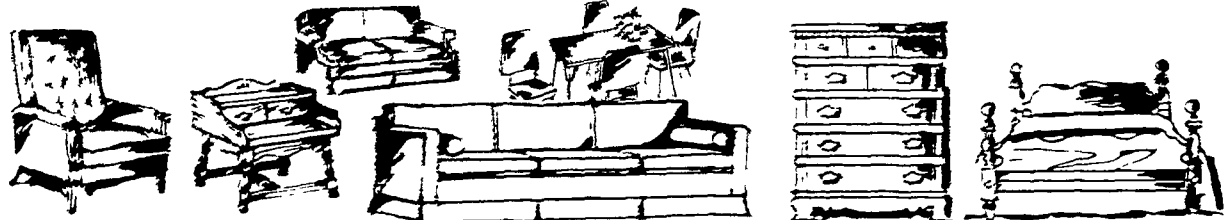
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