

# Mechanized tobacco harvester arrives in Lancaster County

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

**EPHRATA** — For centuries tobacco growing practices have defied mechanization.

From seedbeds and transplanting through harvesting, stripping and baling, these practices have largely remained unchanged, keeping tobacco ranked high as one of Lancaster County's most hand-labor-intensive crops.

But a step in the direction of mechanization is now being taken with the introduction of a tobacco harvester by Hamilton Equipment, Inc., wholesale distributors of farm equipment, of Ephrata.

The harvester, manufactured by Four Star, Inc., of Tennessee, and tested at the University of Kentucky, will be available for the coming harvesting season.

"We've just received one of the production machines," David C. Rupp, assistant sales manager, said.

"We're starting to make contacts with farm equipment dealers concerning the harvester."

Resembling a large three-wheeled golf cart vehicle, complete with umbrella and cooling

fan, the harvester is designed to be operated by one person.

The cutterhead is a circular saw blade located to the rear of tubular row guides. The row guides permit the harvester to self-steer, freeing the operator to handle the cut tobacco stalks with both hands.

The operator can either impale the cut stalks on a spear-tipped lath located just to the right of the seat or place them on a sloped apron, where the plant slides gently to the ground for wilting.

If stalks are speared directly on the harvester, the lath when filled can be released to stand on end in the row to await pickup.

If ground wilted, the stalks would still need to be speared in the normal manner for transport on ladder wagons to the curing sheds.

After cutting, tobacco is wilted to reduce leaf losses experienced when freshly-cut plants are speared.

Start and stopping is controlled

by a foot pedal and the throttle is pre-set to the desired speed.

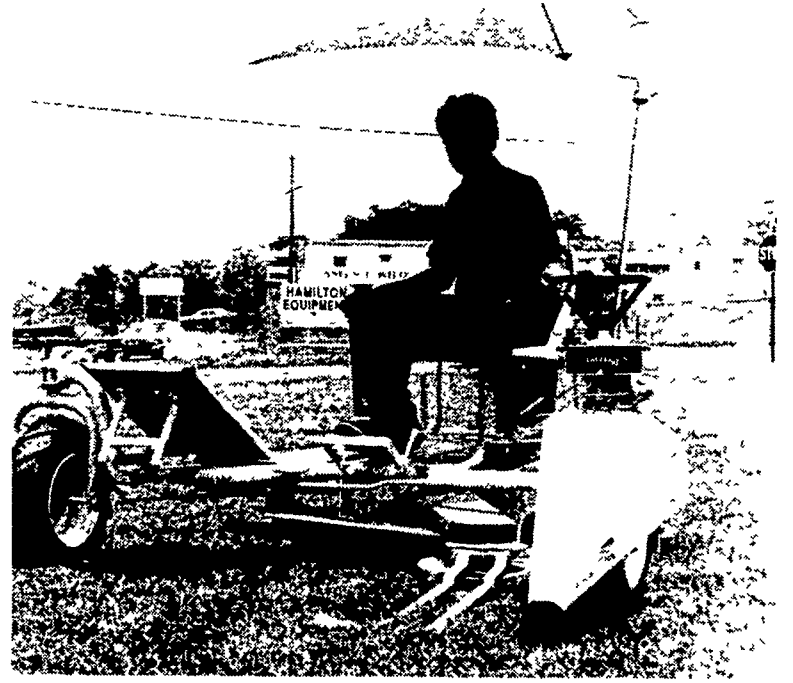
The harvester is powered by an electric-start 12 hp. Kohler engine with chain drive to the rear wheel. There are four forward speeds, ranging from about 1 to 5 mph., and a reverse.

The overall harvester is about eight feet wide and 11 feet long and can accommodate up to 40-42-inch row spacing.

The harvester will be demonstrated at the Tobacco Research Field Day at the University of Maryland Tobacco Experiment Farm near Upper Marlboro on July 29.

Also, it is expected that Lancaster County demonstration of the harvester will be scheduled when local tobacco is ready for harvest.

Growers interested in the harvester should contact their farm equipment dealers. Retail cost is expected to be approximately \$4,300, depending on freight and setup charges.



Three-wheeled tobacco harvester has been received by Hamilton Equipment, Inc., wholesale farm equipment distributor, of Ephrata. Features include row guides leading to cutterhead, which should self-steer harvester, and foot pedal to control starting and stopping.

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## Lycoming County plans dairy week

**MUNCY** — This week begins Lycoming County Dairy week at the Lycoming Mall, Muncy.

Dairy week is being held in conjunction with the Lycoming County Dairy Princess Pageant to be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 26.

The following events have been scheduled for the week, each to begin at 7:30 p.m.

-Monday - The grand opening will feature the introduction of all the dairy princess contestants. Also will be a presentation by the Flutter Wheels, a square dance group from Williamsport.

-Tuesday - Dairy fitting and showing demonstration by the county-wide 4-H dairy club.

-Wednesday - Antique dairy equipment demonstrations and butter churning demonstrations.

-Thursday - Fun Night Contests - Ice cream eating and milk chugging contests.

-Friday - Lycoming County Dairy Princess Pageant.

-Saturday - Milk Contests.

In addition to the evening events, there will be dairy related displays, 4-H dairy related exhibits and milk and cheese samples.

Contestants for the pageant are: Pamela Lowe, Trout Run; Lori Bauder, Jersey Shore; Marylee Hill, Jersey Shore; Darlene Hensler, Lenden; Barbara Heisey, Jersey Shore.

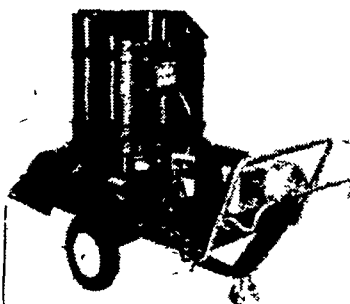
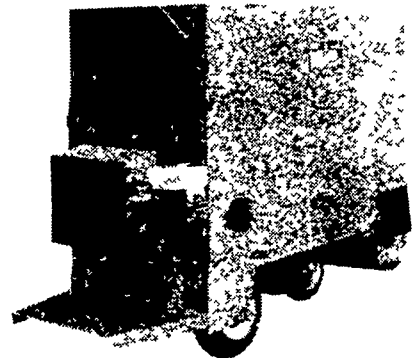
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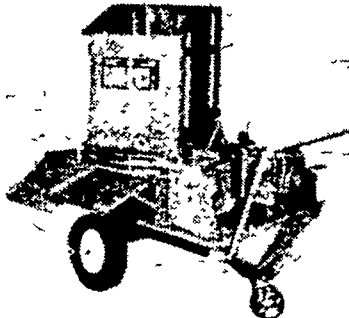
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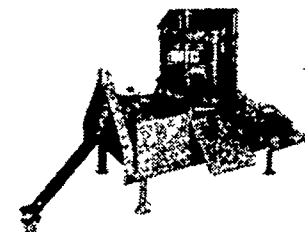
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