

Farm-goers can find 'soup' er meal

BY DEBBIE KOONTZ
HARRISBURG — "I figure, if you're going to make a living from an industry, you should do something to promote that industry," Rudy Grob explains in attempt to illustrate his deep interest in the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association and his yearly venture at making vegetable soup at Farm Show

Friends and loyal patrons of the Show can now readily associate Grob with the delectable soup aroma which fills one corner of the main commercial hall, because he will begin his fifth year of serving at the PVGA booth next week.

It is this distinct aroma which gets most passers-by to stop in their tracks and anxiously hand

over the crumpled dollar bill for the 10 ounce cup of soup; yet it is the taste — owing to Pennsylvania-grown vegetables — which makes a regular customer from most of them.

"We make between four and five thousand servings every year," Grob proudly remarks, "and eight hundred to a thousand dollars goes to vegetable research at Penn State."

This sales manager at Funk's Farm Market is quick to point out that everybody that works at the booth is serving on a volunteer basis.

"We're all members of the Association (which now totals nearly 300 members) and we just want to promote Pennsylvania vegetables. At first when we thought of the idea of coming to the

Show, we felt it would be good to get exposure. But I felt we needed a more worthwhile effort, and this is what we came up with," he explains.

Grob says that in addition to soup, customers will be able to choose from tomato juice and slices of quiche. And for those of you who just can't eat soup without crackers, rest assured there will be an abundant supply of those on the counter also.

What's the secret of the delicious soup? "Well we just put in so many pounds of corn and so much of this and that," he smiles. "We make the soup in huge gallon drums holding about 10 gallons at a time. The base comes from Turkey Hill and we just keep adding to it."

The soup includes 13 vegetables: leeks, peas, corn, green beans and

lima beans, carrots, celery, potatoes, green peppers, tomatoes, onions, parsley, and tomato juice and beef stock, noodles and beef.

"We try to get just Pennsylvania-grown vegetables," he says, admitting that he himself provides the leeks.

"These I grow at Funk's Farm Market. I used 96 leeks last year; that's 24 bunches with 4 in a bunch."

That's a lot of leeks — but that's also a lot of proof that the PVGA is just another Association working toward the Department of Agriculture's motto "We're growing better." If you want to sample how this soup is growing better every year, stop by the booth and have a cup. They'll be serving 8:30 to 8:30 every day, Monday through Friday.

Nov. CPI indicates food price decline

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The consumer price index released today by the U.S. Labor Department indicates food prices fell 0.2 percent in November (before seasonal adjustment) according to Assistant Secretary of Agriculture William Leshner.

This is the second consecutive monthly decline and reflects a pattern of generally lower farm commodity prices over the last half of the year, he said.

Large supplies and lower prices for beef, pork and poultry were the primary source of the decline. As a result, food prices in November averaged only 4.8 percent above a year earlier.

Downward pressure on farm and wholesale commodity prices in recent months and seasonal increases in food supplies in the fourth quarter will continue to dampen retail food price rises through the end of the year and into the first quarter of 1982.

The over-all increase in food prices for 1981 will be near 8 percent, with the farm value of

food increasing very little, Leshner said. This will be the third successive year in which food prices have risen less than the general inflation rate.

"Farmers will need higher prices in the future if the nation is to be assured of an adequate food supply at reasonable prices," Leshner said.

Prices for food at grocery stores fell 0.4 percent, while prices for meals at restaurants, cafeterias, and other eating establishments rose 0.3 percent. Prices for red meats fell 1.1 percent, the result of a continued high slaughter rate. Poultry prices fell 2.2 percent, influenced partly by very large supplies and sharply lower prices for turkeys.

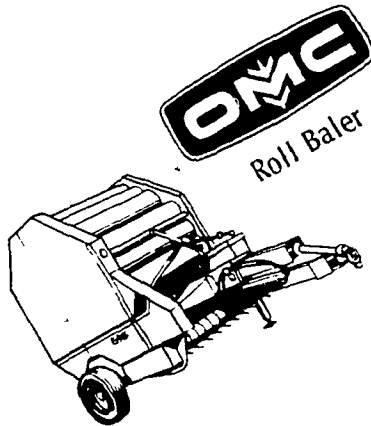
Changes in prices of other foods were mixed. Prices for fresh fruits were down 5.3 percent as citrus supplies increased seasonally. Fresh vegetable prices were up 1.3 percent, while prices for sugar and sweets, fats and oils, and nonalcoholic beverages all declined. Cereal and bakery product prices rose moderately.



Rudy Grob prepares for the multitude of soup enthusiasts who will patronize his stand

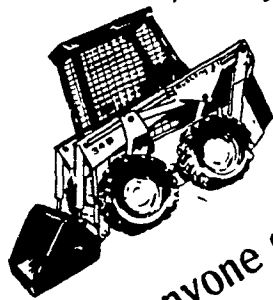
next week. To his left is one of the large multi gallon drums which will hold the soup.

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