

Pa.

# And view latest in syrup operations



State princess: Princess Hyde, first runner-up.

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splants, a barn trimmed in oak, a solar operation and a farm in Washington Co., Maine that yields 1000 lbs. of blueberries hand-harvested per acre.

The two-day Pa. Maple Tour began Friday morning from the Corrian Hotel in Corry where most of the members stayed. Three busloads first toured the Northrup Egg Farm, near Corry. A relatively large poultry operation in this area, Gaylord Northrup said their 25,000 hens lay 2000 dozen eggs per day, averaging less than 1 per hen.

Gaylord and Dennis Northrup operate the egg farm with the aid of their parents and families. They purchase day-old chicks and raise them, debeaking at one week to prevent harmful pecking and feed spillage. Every 20 weeks 14,000

chicks are purchased. At that time, the hens which have decreased egg production, at 13 mos., are sold through PFA to companies for soups, sandwiches, etc.

The general comment watching the counting, washing, drying, candling (checking for cracks and bloodiness), and packaging — almost all of this done by machines — was over the size of the operation. Even those living nearby had failed to realize the large scale of the farm. Among those touring with the maple producers was Fulvia Nicoli an exchange student from Italy. She was fascinated by her first visit to an egg farm.

The second stop was to the Phillip Northrup maple sugar house, near Spartansburg. Phillip and son Randy operate a dairy farm along with their sugar house.

This Spring, egg farmers Gaylord and Dennis, went into the maple business with their brother to purchase new equipment; namely a reverse osmosis machine (RO). It cost \$17,000 but has cut fuel costs and boiling time in half.

Bill Coombs, the U.S. distributor of R.O.'s for Memtak from Wilmington, Vt. explained its purpose. "It basically acts as a filter. It takes water out of the sap more efficiently than boiling by reducing the energy needed."

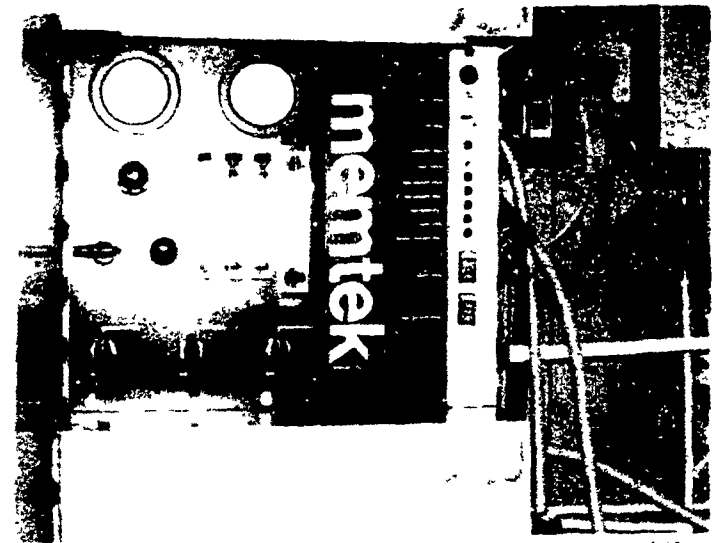
When asked if this was a new addition to maple production he explained that although experimenting was done in the 60's there was no wide use of it until a few years ago. "Energy costs were low then and technology fairly new. Now, with energy costs increasing and with electronic improvements, we've found a place for these machines."

Although these RO's are a large initial investment they not only cut costs and labor but also enable the producer to more readily regulate the color and flavor of the syrup.

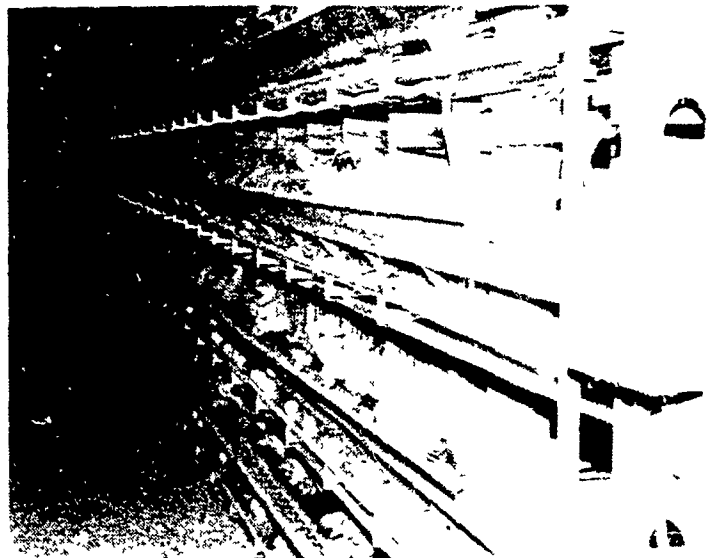
Next on the agenda was the Troy Firth center evaporator on Rt. 77 near Spartansburg. According to Troy and Co. Agent Joe Beard this is the largest operation of its kind in the state. In 1983 Firth made 2300 gallons of syrup, about 60% of his normal crop.

Firth has taps all over NW Pa., including 6000 taps on one block (country block). This year he completed his tapping in three days time. He credits the short tapping time to being ready.

"Everything is ready for it-it has to be", he added. He uses all plastic tubing saying he has no use for buckets.



Reverse Osmosis machine has reduced fuel costs and time involved in processing maple products for Northrup family.



Total of 25,000 laying hens are found on Northrup Egg Farm, one of the stops on Maple Tour in Northwestern Pa.

Firth devotes the whole year to his operation. Although he can't be working directly with maple products year round he's always readying his equipment by cleaning, repairing and renovating. Then it's time to cut wood for fuel and get the tubing run in the Fall before it gets too cold. Troy Firth is the sole owner of the business and employs six to eight people during the busiest time and others as he needs help.

Lunch was served at Firth's by the Sparta Firemen Ladies Auxiliary. Following lunch the tour continued to Troyer's Potato Chip Factory in Waterford. This is the manufacturing plant for Troyer's snacks which are distributed throughout Pa. and N.Y. The tour concluded Friday with a visit to the Corry Fish Hatchery.

Saturday two separate tours were scheduled. The ladies could visit Paschke Mum Farm and then shop at the Millcreek Mall, one of the largest in the Northwest.

The other tour to Northeast, Pa. included Larry Young's Fruit Market and Cider Press; Penn Shore Winery; Keystone Processing Plant; lunch at Pano's smorgasbord; and three sugar houses - Owen Johnson's, Greg Walberg's and Charles Bush's.



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group travelled to New York to six New England states at Cornell University and various types of rural production. Dairy, and horse operations along maple sugar and fruit uses were visited from June 30. Many of these were by being first in agricultural uses. Beard toured a farm with 80 embryo tran-

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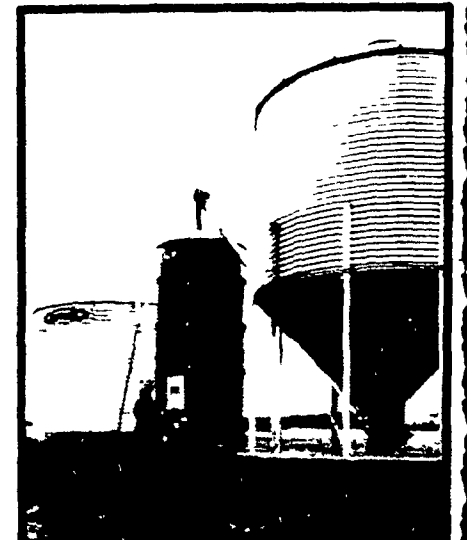
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