

Melons a hit at Laurel Farmers' Auction Market

LAUREL, DE. — The Laurel Farmers' Auction Market is a major outlet for Delaware-grown watermelons and cantaloupes, as well as a source of other fresh-picked local produce. Two recent surveys by University of Delaware agricultural economists of buyers and potential buyers at the market indicate considerable satisfaction with its services. Survey results also shed light on the use of locally grown produce by Delaware roadside market operators.

At the request of the Southern Delaware Truck Growers' Association—the 1,500-member organization which owns and operates the Laurel "Block"—agricultural marketing specialist Dr. Ulrich C. Toensmeyer and extension marketing specialist Carl L. German mailed a questionnaire last January to 264

commercial produce buyers, mostly large wholesalers and brokers along the eastern seaboard from New York to the Carolinas. In April, the economists sent a second questionnaire to 309 roadside market and other direct market operators in Delaware.

Purposes of the surveys were to: 1) determine if changes were needed in the auction market's operation, and 2) increase sales of melons and other produce by attracting new buyers.

"The obvious strength of the auction is its melon market," Toensmeyer and German conclude. Buyers presently doing business at the Block appear to be well satisfied with both the quality and range of produce offered and the services provided by the management and board.

The surveys showed the market supplies 18 percent of the produce needed by 33 percent of the commercial buyers surveyed. Thirty percent of the direct market operators who replied indicated that they bought an average of 25 percent of their produce at the Laurel auction.

Based on questionnaire responses, Toensmeyer and German have suggested that the Block management develop a price reporting system, and routinely mail written reports to regular and potential clients.

Delaware consumers should be interested to know that half of the operators who responded to the roadside market survey indicated they buy produce directly from local sources, often nearby farms. Over 35 percent of operators who said they buy from the Block indicated they grow about half of their own needs. Seventy-three percent of the respondents said they grow some or all of their produce. Thus, during the growing season, it would appear that Delaware roadside markets are a good source of fresh local fruits and vegetables.

In response to the question, "Have you bought fresh produce from the Laurel Market?", 33 percent of the direct market operators replied "Yes." They also said they consider it a good early source of produce, feel it has good watermelons and cantaloupes, and think its prices are fair.

Besides melons, what do roadside market operators buy at the Block? Survey respondents said they bought potatoes, cucumbers, sweet corn, peppers, apples, cabbage, green beans, strawberries, peaches, asparagus and tomatoes.

Based on response to the questionnaires, Toensmeyer and German say their surveys appear to have helped increase the number of buyers who want information on product availability, market operation and the market season at the Laurel Block.

The auction market is about to open for its 46th season. It usually opens in early to mid-July when the local melon crop comes on. Prospective buyers can learn this year's exact opening date and find out how the market operates by calling manager Jan Conway at 302-875-3147.

To obtain reports on either

survey, contact extension marketing specialist Carl German, Townsend Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19717-1303 (302-451-2511). Ask for either extension circular 146, "Survey of

Produce Buyers for Laurel Farmers' Auction Market," or circular 147, "Survey of Direct Marketing Produce Buyers for Laurel Farmers' Auction Market."



A truckload of Delaware melons passing through Laurel auction market. Nearly \$2.5 million worth of produce—primarily watermelons and cantaloupes—is sold here each summer to commercial buyers, brokers and roadside market operators.

COME ON YOU GUYS. MOVE OVER!

NEED MORE ROOM?
Read The Real Estate Ads
In Lancaster Farming's
Classified Section

SUMMER SPECIALS



ON SELECTED BUILDINGS

30% DISCOUNT*— AND SAVE THOUSANDS!!!

LIMITED STOCK

The ALL STEEL BUILDING SYSTEM is a low-cost, fast, efficient way of providing completely open interior space. Check out these great features:

- No beams, no posts — 100% usable space
- Easy erection — no high labor costs
- 100% maintenance free — no painting or leaks
- Super new panel for strength against wind & snow
- Straight sidewalls — no loss of space 100% clear span

*DEPENDING ON SIZE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL TOLL FREE

1-800-448-4511 EXT. 346

IN NEW YORK CALL 1-800-962-1480 EXT 346

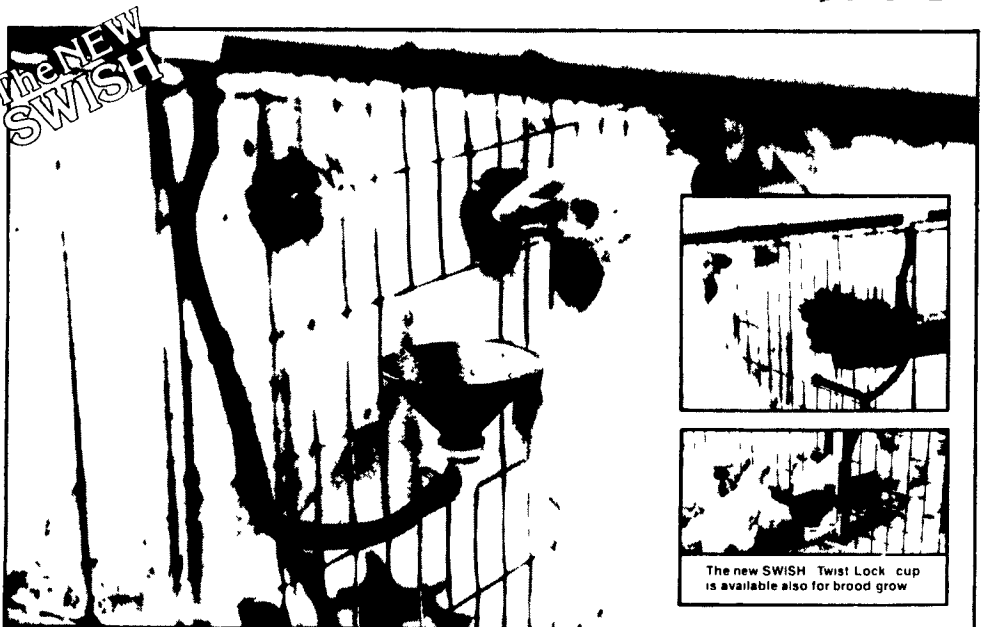
ASK ABOUT OUR NO DOWNPAYMENT

LEASING PROGRAMS

ALL STEEL BUILDING SYSTEMS

ALL STEEL MANUFACTURES STEEL BUILDINGS UP TO 98' WIDE BY UNLIMITED LENGTH WITH NO NONSENSE GUARANTEE!

"Twist-Lock" cups: newest innovation from the new leader



...another reason SWISH saves you more labor, more birds, and more money

The newest twist in cage watering makes cup cleaning and maintenance a real snap — it's SWISH's Twist-Lock cups for cage layers and brood-grow watering systems

Saves labor. No more contortions with hand tools inside a cage — one simple twist of the wrist unlocks and removes the unitized cup and valve. It's that easy to maintain when necessary. But with SWISH it's hardly ever necessary. That's because our cup is self-cleaning. Our patented valve keeps the cup clean by flushing any feed particles out so birds can consume them with the water.

Installation is a snap too with SWISH's new cups — they simply snap into the desired location and the hose attaches to the water line outlet. These are some

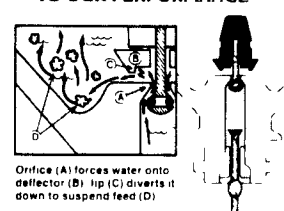
of the ways SWISH's new cup saves you labor — easy installation, low maintenance and labor savings between flocks because our cup constantly cleans itself!

Helps save more birds. Because our cup is self-cleaning, algae and bacteria growth is not a problem as with cups that don't flush out feed particles. Clean cups mean less chance of disease and less mortality. And our big cup means good access to water for a good level of bird health.

SWISH saves you money. That's the bottom line with a system that cuts labor and keeps birds alive and productive.

Get all the facts about our new cup and other SWISH innovations. See your SWISH distributor or contact us.

PATENTED VALVE IS KEY TO OUR PERFORMANCE



Orifice (A) forces water onto deflector (B). Tip (C) diverts it down to suspend feed (D).

The NEW SWISH — total commitment to quality & service

Northeast agri systems

NORTHEAST AGRI SYSTEMS, INC.

P.O. Box 187
Fitchville, CT 06334
Phone (203) 642-7529

Local Representative
DAVID NEWMAN
(717) 299-9905

SWISH
watering systems
now a division of CTB Inc